TO

MRS. NEWENHAM,

OF MARYBOROUGH.

MADAM,

WHEN I first thought of writing the trifling production, which I now lay at your feet, many reasons concurred to perplex and prevent my design: I will take a soliloquy which this embarrassment gave rise to. If, said I, (which is a moot point) if I should be able to write in my work the fertility of invention, with the correction of judgment, still may the

obſcurity of the author caſt ſuch a ſhade on the production, as all the brilliancy of genius may not be ſufficient to diſſipate: it is therefore neceſſary that I chooſe a *patron* for this child of my brain; whoſe confeſſed benevolence of heart, elegance of taſte, and ſuperiority of underſtanding, ſhall, under the darts of malignant criticiſm pointleſs, excite the love of the virtuous, the admiration of the wiſe, and the aſtoniſhment of the ignorant. Is ſuch a perſon to be found? The queſtion ſtaggered me.——And if found, ſaid I again, while I ſpeak only the ſentiments of my heart, may not the many-headed *blatant monſter* give to the dictates of truth the appellation of flattery?

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[illegible] the name of NEWBERRY be ruſhed upon my memory, and doubt the attain end.—Here, ſaid I, exaggeration can-not mingle with praiſe, or cenſure await encomium.

SATISFIED on this head, I devote to you, Madam, a production, which however inſignificant in itſelf, will borrow a value from its protectreſs.

I WILL now ſuppoſe myſelf in the ſituation of a perſon who, being poſ-ſeſſed of a ſtatue, wrought by the maſterly chiſel of a Phidia or Prax-iteles, induced by an abſurd and miſ-taken taſte, fancies he can render its beauties more obvious and more exquiſite, by the lively varniſh of a pencil.——I ſuppoſe myſelf in his

ſituation, Madam, but I will avoid his error, and not vainly imagine that what is in the aggregate ſo perfect, can need a more glaring illuſtration.

I AM, Madam, with the higheſt reſpect and eſteem,

your moſt devoted,

and moſt obliged

humble ſervant,

ANNE FULLER.

PREFACE.

PREFACE.

PREFATORY diſcourſes, whether well or ill compoſed, are generally diſregarded, when affixed to a work whoſe origin is fiction, and whoſe purpoſe entertainment. They are in truth rather a tribute to the author's ſelf-love, than a deprecation of the reader's cenſures or criticiſm. Pardon me, my brethren of the quill, if I, though a novice in your profeſſion, preſume to unfold its myſteries to the public ſcrutiny. Yes, my dear aſſociates, ye may be offended, but ye cannot juſtly deny that all writers, (from the ſublime faſhioner of an epic poem to the Grub-ſtreet chronicler of a bloody murder) feel a natural tendency to extol their own talents, and to decry the wit of their competitors.

Now, as neither egotiſm nor envy can with propriety find place in the body of a production which treats of imaginary perſonages, what remains to the hard driven vanity of the poor author, but the ſecure ſhelter of a preface, where he may blazon his own merits with impunity; and gratify his propenſity to ſatire (if he really has any), by couching keen inuendo's under the agreeable dreſs of ſmooth and well turned periods.

PERHAPS, reader, thou doſt expect that having thus argued againſt prefaces, I will now lay down my pen and prove my principles by my practice: if ſuch are thy thoughts, the meaſure of thy ſimplicity exceeds that of thy knowledge. But if thou art wiſe, and haſt read the volume of experience, thou wilt not wonder at a proceeding ſeemingly contradictory, yet highly natural: for is it not a fact, that we are accuſtomed to condemn in others what we imagine allowable in ourſelves.

ourſelves. Reader, whether thou art of this ſtamp or the former, I will make no more excuſes; they lead to trite obſervations which I hate, and which I fancy thou wilt not approve. Forget then the paſt, and awake thy attention to the preſent; I am going to commence my preface;—behold!——

I SWEAR!—not on the faith of a Catholic Chriſtian, like the ſage Ced Hamet Ben Engeli, but by the nine inſpired ſiſters and their coadjutors, viddlicet, the fount of Aganippe, and the hoof of Pegaſus, that I meant not to offend the majeſty of ſacred truth, by giving her but a ſecondary place in the following pages. Neceſſity, ſtronger than prudence, obliges me to give fiction the pre-eminence; but I beſeech the before-named excellent perſon to obſerve, that this advantage is but apparent, and that the laboured ornaments of her competitor ſerve but as foils to enhance the luſtre of her own unvar-

niſhed and tranſcendant graces. I will remind her too, that I have preſerved her genuine purity as unblemiſhed as circumſtances would admit, and I truſt ſhe will accept an apology inſpired by herſelf.

Such, reader, is my preface.—If thou doſt not allow it to be as much to the purpoſe as any written by my cotemporaries, I muſt bid thee farewell in the words of the Archbiſhop of Granada to his quondam Secretary *.

* Gil Blas.

ALAN

ALAN FITZ-OSBORNE,

AN

HISTORICAL TALE.

BOOK THE FIRST.

AMONGST the nobles who added ſplendour to the court of England in the reign of the Third Henry, Alan, Earl of Fitz-Oſborne, ſhone foremoſt in power, and in fame. In his earlieſt youth he had joined thoſe barons who ſo bravely withſtood the arbitrary deſigns of the inglorious John; and ſcarce had the down of manhood dawned upon his cheek, when he gave moſt diſtinguiſhed tokens of a valour, that ſtill continued to ripen with his years. Yet his courage had nothing

thing in it of ferocious, nor ever had his ſword been drawn in the cauſe of injuſtice or oppreſſion. Spirited to the proud, and gracious to the humble, he exacted reſpect from the firſt, and obtained affection from the laſt. Yet had his temper a fault, though it aroſe from a virtue: warm, impetuous and unſuſpecting, he too readily gave ear to the ſuggeſtions of thoſe in whom he placed his confidence, nor could his eye ever diſcover a blemiſh where he had fixed his heart.

Unhappily, the perſon, to whom the ties of blood and of affection had riveted him moſt nearly, was of all others, leaſt deſerving of his favour. Haughty, yet mean; avaricious, yet profuſe; ſtern and ſevere to his dependants, and a ſycophant to his ſuperiors, ſuch was Walter Fitz-Oſborne, the brother of Alan. By a pre-eminence in courtly arts, he had ſucceſſively ariſen, from places of leſs importance, to one of immediate truſt about the perſon of the king. Henry, untaught

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by the misfortunes of his father, or the common experience of mankind, generally chose his favourites amongst those who could best sooth his weakness with adulation, and feed his suspicions with calumny; he singled Walter Fitz-Osborne from this worthless herd, and loaded him with honours, and with wealth.

Alan had now arrived at that period of life, when the fiery ardour of youth is moderated by the curb of discretion.—His family called upon him to perpetuate a name, which he had brought to its meridian of glory; and Matilda, the heiress of De Burgh, became the object of his hopes and of his wishes. Heaven had endowed her with a form that surpassed the fairest, and a mind that even excelled it: a virtue that rendered pride laudable, and a pride that dignified virtue. She had listened to the praises of Fitz-Osborne, with a greedy ear, and her attention was succeeded by love.——He wooed; his suit was crowned, was crowned

ed with ſucceſs; Henry himſelf preſided at their nuptials, and the ſponſal feaſt was lengthened to many days, and ſolemnized with courtly pomp and gallant ſpectacles.——That period over, Fitz-Oſborne carried his beauteous Counteſs to a caſtle in the north of England, the gift of the conqueror to his brave progenitor.——Here the fair Matilda reigned ſupreme in the boſom of her beloved Lord, and her gentle virtues ſecurely attached the hearts of his numerous vaſſals.—A lovely pledge of their tenderneſs ſoon beheld the light, and riveted the bands of conjugal affection more cloſely.—The mild graces of Matilda, and the manly beauties of Fitz-Oſborne, already dawned in young Alan's features: he was committed to the care of Alice, a faithful dependant, and nurtured under his parent's eye. But two ſummers had rolled over his head, when Walter Fitz-Oſborne returned from an embaſſy with which Henry had intruſted him: he viſited the Caſtle

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of Fitz-Osborne; beheld Matilda—and burned with unlawful love.

The unsuspecting Earl received his brother with every demonstration of kindness and joy; his arrival was the signal of pleasure; the castle resounded with the noise of mirth and minstrelsy; and the Countess exhausted invention itself, to furnish entertainments for this viper of her peace.

Incapable of gratitude, and unmoved by paternal tenderness, the soul of Walter felt alone the dire sensations of envy, hatred and illicit love. "What!" said he to himself, while the gleom of malice lowered upon his brow, "shall the same passion that consumes me, add to the felicity of Alan?—Why was not I the elder?—Then should this minion of nature and of fortune have felt the sting of dependence!—then should I have been lord of these vast domains, and master of Matilda!" Yet notwithstanding this tumult in the bosom of Walter, his countenance

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preserved. In the presence of Fitz-Osborne and the Countess, an appearance of smooth and unruffled tranquillity. Often would he take young Alan in his arms, or dandle him on his knee; and while the glance of dissembled pleasure shot from his eye, and the hollow smile of deceit sat upon his lips, press him to his breast, with all the seeming fervour of affection.

Two months had elapsed in this course of fraud, and the master stroke was yet to play. He pretended a sudden mandate from Henry, and hastened to court. The king spoke of Fitz-Osborne. Walter looked displeased. "Is not the Earl happy?"—asked Henry. "Too happy, my liege, for his duty and his glory: sunk in the lap of indolence he forgets that he has a king to serve, or a faith to defend. Now when infidels insult the holy city, when the banner of the red cross waves proudly throughout Christendom, my brother—heir of the honours

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and the house of Fitz-Osborne!—O shame!—unmindful of his former glory, wasting the prime of his days in idle blandishments, and luxurious ease!" "He shall not"—said Henry, "we will give him the command of a chosen body of troops, and he shall join the banner of the red cross. Do thou bear our mandate to him; it will arouse his sleeping spirit."—"And me,"—said Walter, assuming an air of concern, "he shall reap the laurels of war, and my name shall be sunk in oblivion."—"Not so," replied the King, "thy counsels are the support of my throne, and the favour of thy sovereign is the best fame"——Walter bowed, and retired from his presence. He then sought the Lord of Arundel, and bade him accompany him to the dwelling of Fitz-Osborne.—This young noble was one of those summer flies, who so often infest the walls of palaces. Dainty, tripping, affected, delicate in form, and impotent

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of ſoul.—Him did Walter chooſe as an inſtrument of his own baſe purpoſe.

They reached the caſtle, and a ſcene of feſtivity and of pleaſure enſued. The lovely Matilda preſided at the board, and Alice, with young Alan in her arms, ſtood at ſome diſtance. The ſparkling goblet went round. The minſtrels touched their harps, and the hall reſounded with the praiſes of the Counteſs: ſudden they changed the ſtrain, and ſung the deeds of heroes, and the glory of Fitz-Oſborne.——Walter ſeized that moment. "And is Alan"—ſaid he, "content with the praiſes of *paſt* actions?—Shall he not continue to deſerve them?"—The Earl ſtarted, and Matilda bluſhed.—"Read the will of Henry"—purſued Walter, preſenting a paper. The Earl caſt his eye over the contents. "Yes"—cried he, riſing, "my ſovereign ſhall be obeyed, and I will wipe the ruſt from my ſword." "O Alan!" cried the Counteſs;—ſhe called Alice, took the child in her arms,

again

again repeated, "O Alan!"—and looked at Fitz-Oſborne. "Matilda"—ſaid the Earl, in a ſoftened tone.—"No," reſumed he, aſſuming a more determined air, "no, thou *wouldſt* not have thy huſband a traitor to his prince, and to his honour."

A generous ſpirit beamed in the eyes of the Counteſs. "True—O moſt true!" cried ſhe, "the daughter of De Burgh ſhould love a hero.—Thou ſhalt go—I will array thee for the battle." "My wife!—my heroine!" exclaimed Fitz-Oſborne, claſping her in his arms. Envy ſtung the ſoul of Walter. "I will interrupt your loves!" ſaid he to himſelf, and a glance of malice darted from his eye.

The feaſt broke up—Fitz-Oſborne retired to give orders to his vaſſals. Walter whiſpered young Arundel to ſteal the Counteſs from her ſorrows, and then followed the Earl. "My brother,"—ſaid Walter, "I could not have ſuſpected ſuch fortitude from thy Matilda." "Is ſhe not noble?" aſked the Earl. "Surpaſſing all

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her ſex"—replied Walter. "Yet ſhe loves me"—ſaid Fitz-Oſborne. "I believe ſo"—anſwered Walter. "Believe—canſt thou entertain a doubt?" "Women are naturally fickle"—interrupted the diſſembler. "Matilda fickle—my Matilda?" "I ſaid not thy Matilda." But thou meaneſt her." "Thou knoweſt not—or if I did, my thoughts were nothing." "True"—ſaid the Earl; yet his countenance wore the air of perplexity. They returned to the apartment where they had left the Counteſs, and found her converſing with Arundel, who held the infant Alan in his arms. Fitz-Oſborne ſtarted involuntarily. "Heed them not," ſaid Walter, in a myſterious tone. At that moment the fell arrows of ſuſpicion pierced the heart of Fitz-Oſborne.

The tender Matilda, agitated with fears for her huſband, yet unwilling to diſcloſe them, ſought to cover her concern with the veil of heroiſm. Glory was on her lips, and apprehenſion in her ſoul; ſhe

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ſpoke of the battle, and turned pale at her own deſcription ——The Earl, attentive only to her words, perceived not her emotions. "Yes!"—ſaid he to himſelf, "unfaithful Matilda, thou canſt ſupport the thoughts of my abſence, while thou haſt ſuch a ſolacer as Arundel." Walter perceived that his unworthy artifice had ſucceeded, and the looks which he frequently caſt towards the Counteſs and Arundel, added new force to the ſuſpicions of his brother.

In the earlieſt dawn of the enſuing morn the Earl aroſe; with haſty and diſtracted ſteps he traverſed the ſpacious park, and plunged into the thickeſt receſſes of a neighbouring foreſt. Here extended on the damp earth did Walter find him, and approached like the firſt tempter, to utter the effuſions of fraud, under the maſk of friendſhip.

"My brother,"—ſaid the recreant, "why this poſture?—Is it meet for Fitz-Oſborne—for the huſband of Matilda?"—

"Ha!"

"Ha!" replied the Earl, ſtarting, "Matilda, ſaidſt thou—where is ſhe now?"—— "In the court of the caſtle with Arundel, waiting thy return." "The Counteſs with Arundel?" "Yes, they hold ſprightly converſe; he beguiles her of her grief for thee." "O Heaven!" exclaimed the Earl, riſing. "My brother ſure you do not ſuſpect," cried Walter, with an affected heſitation. "Suſpect! have I cauſe?" "Come, let us return to the caſtle," ſaid Walter. "Tell me," reſumed the Earl, "tell me before we ſtir, haſt thou perceived any change in Matilda?" "My brother!"—cried Walter, with an air of myſterious ſorrow. "Torture me no further," exclaimed the Earl, "I am on the rack of ſuſpenſe:—Matilda—Arundel—O Heaven!" "Unhappy Alan!' cried Walter, caſting down his eyes. "Unhappy—then it is true!"—but by Heaven I will ſacrifice the minion at her feet!" "Nay, ſtop, be not ſo impetuous," ſaid Walter,—"we have no

proof!

proof!—falſe—falſe woman!—I thought thy ſoul was mine, yet haſt thou given it to a courtly toy, a gilded inſect—at firſt ſight too, O monſtrous!" "No—not at firſt ſight perhaps:—they may have been known *before*."——"Ha!—thou bringeſt conviction to me. Let us return."—— "Fool!" cried Walter to himſelf, "thou runneſt blindfold into the ſnare, and thy peace ſhall periſh!"

The Counteſs haſted to meet her Lord, with light footſteps and a ſmiling countenance. "Thou art the daughter of De Burgh," ſaid the Earl. "And thy loving Matilda,"—anſwered ſhe, putting one ſnowy arm around his neck. "She is not falſe!" ſaid Fitz-Oſborne to himſelf, and returned her embrace. Walter beheld that renewed confidence with rage and malice,—yet he aſſumed an aſpect foreign to his heart, and caſt a glance of feigned compaſſion towards his brother. The Earl haſtily tore himſelf from Matilda, and walked into the caſtle. Walter

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soon joined him. "Didst thou observe her countenance," said Fitz-Osborne.—"I *did*," returned Walter, with a deep sigh. "Hell! Hell!" cried the Earl, in a transport of frenzy. This violent resentment did not suit the purpose of Walter, and he sought to allay the storm he had raised; but his soothings were couched so artfully as to fix an indelible sting in the bosom of his brother.

Nine days more passed away, and on the tenth was the Earl to depart. He took Walter aside. "I go," said he, "and who shall guard the faith of Matilda?" "That will I," replied Walter. "Best of kinsmen and of friends!" said the Earl, embracing him, "to thy care then I commit the protection of my honour. We have yet but suspicion:—do thou take heed to prevent certainty."——Arundel quitted the castle that day, and the Earl surprised Matilda weeping. "Do these tears fall for our guest?" said he.——"O Alan!

"O Alan!—to-morrow!" answered the Countess. "True, I depart with the morning's dawn—but then thou wilt not lament me." "Not lament thee, Alan?" "No," said the Earl, correcting himself; "for then where would be thy heroism?" "O, my Lord, my husband, I am no longer a heroine;—so soon to lose thee—so very soon!—Alas, I am still a woman, and a wife!" These words changed the suspicions of the Earl into tenderness, but Walter shortly inspired him with emotions of a different nature.

Early on the ensuing morn, all the youth of Fitz-Osborne's domains, attired in warlike garb, and mounted on proud coursers, waited the coming forth of their chief in the court of the castle. The Earl arrayed himself in splendid armour, and Matilda closed the lacings of his helmet. To his bosom hung the bloody cross, the badge of religion and valour, and his right hand grasped a glittering faulchion. He presented himself to his

followers, and a peal of exultation rent the air.

Matilda ruſhed out. "I ſee thee for the laſt time!" cried ſhe, caſting herſelf into his arms.—"O Alan—Alan—can I live and loſe thee?" "Thou loveſt me, Matilda"—ſaith the Earl fondly—"thou loveſt me, and we will meet again." He embraced her, and called for Alice and his infant ſon. "Here"—ſaid he to Walter, putting the young Alan in his arms—"here is part of thy charge. Be thou lord of this caſtle, and protector of Matilda, during the abſence of Fitz-Oſborne." The Counteſs ſet up a cry of grief, and again preſſed her huſband to her breaſt. He ſighed, kiſſed her cheek, mounted his neighing ſteed, looked back thrice, and rode off at the head of his followers.—— Matilda remained rooted to the ſpot on which ſhe ſtood: When her eyes could no longer diſcover Alan—"He is gone!" cried ſhe, and fell motionleſs on the earth. Her attendants, aſſiſted by the treacher-

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ous Walter, raiſed and ſupported her to the caſtle. They recovered her to life, and ſhe deſired to be left alone with Alice and the child.

"Almighty diſpoſer of events," (ſaid ſhe, taking young Alan in her arms, and falling on her knees), "do thou hear the petition of a wife and mother. Guard my huſband with the ſhield of thy ſtrength; he is thy own ſoldier, O God, and fighteth in thy cauſe. Be rage baniſhed from his boſom; let mercy and valour, hand in hand, lead him to conqueſt. Return him to his native land, and to his loving wife, in honour and ſafety.—And thou, who art the protector of the orphan and the helpleſs, defend the tender years of this innocent babe from the ſcourge of oppreſſion, and the arts of falſhood. Inſpire him with the love of piety and truth, and give him to emulate the renown of his ſire. So ſhall the ſoul of Matilda rejoice, and her laſt breath be quivered out in praiſe and thankſgiving."

The Counteſs continued kneeling ſome time in ſilent ejaculation, and Alice imitated her poſture. At length both aroſe, and the Counteſs calling her attendants, diveſted herſelf of the rich and gorgeous dreſs ſhe had on, for a mourning habit. "Never," ſaid ſhe to Alice, "never will I quit theſe ſable robes, 'till I again behold Fitz-Oſborne."

Walter's heart beat high with the tranſports of ſucceſsful villainy; but not willing to encounter the penetrating eye of Matilda, he retired from her preſence, to the ſhades of the foreſt. "Yes," cried he, in the accent of exultation, "my prey is in the toils. Matilda, the beauteous Matilda, ſhall be mine, and I will triumph over the credulous Alan!—fool!—to leave his beſt treaſure in the hands of the ſpoiler—to commit his ſon too to my protection;—yes, it ſhall be ſuch protection as the wolf affords the lamb!"

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He returned to the caſtle, but things were not yet ripe for a diſcloſure, and he rather avoided than ſought the Counteſs, fearful that paſſion might prove too ſtrong for craft. Matilda paſſed her hours in houſehold duties, and in vows for the ſafety of her Lord. News arrived that Fitz-Oſborne had embarked, and a mandate for Walter's return to court, came at the ſame time. He obeyed, and found a ſtorm burſt over his head, which required ſome addreſs to diſſipate. The Lord De Gray accuſed him, in the preſence of Henry, of having carried on a criminal intercourſe with his daughter, before his late embaſſy, and claimed either the right of combat, or a proper reparation, by marriage.——The King, trembling for the danger of his favourite, choſe the latter; and to engage Walter's compliance made him a gift of a caſtle and ſome eſtates, which had been alienated to the crown.

Walter pretended to yield to the prayers of the King, what his own ſoul wiſhed; and this ſubmiſſion endeared him ſtill more than ever to his maſter. The ſhameful nuptials were immediately ſolemnized with much pomp and ſplendour. A ſon, the fruit of criminal love, was legitimated by law; and Walter carried him and his ſpouſe to the caſtle with which Henry had preſented him. But not long did he continue in that ſpot. His paſſion for the Counteſs returned with double force on a compariſon of her chaſtity with the weakneſs of his wife: Strange, that a conviction of her virtue ſhould inſpire him with a deſire to deſtroy it:—Yet ſo it was, and he haſtened to the dwelling of his deſtined victim.

Matilda received him with her wonted cordiality, and he informed her of his marriage, but not of the circumſtances which preceded it. In an accent full

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of ſweetneſs ſhe congratulated him on his felicity, and made fervent vows for its continuance. Walter ſighed. "Why that ſigh, my brother?" aſked Matilda. "Hope," ſaid he, in a dejected tone, "is a fatal deceiver; it teaches us to expect happineſs, where it is not to be found, and when we are enſnared beyond the poſſibility of eſcape, withdraws its flattering illuſions." He quitted her preſence at theſe words, with a penſive and melancholy air.

"Alas!" ſaid the innocent Matilda to herſelf, "how terrible is the lot of humanity; worth cannot exempt from its calamities, or Walter would be happy; ſevered as I am from the Lord of my affections, my fate is yet preferable to his; I mourn an accidental ſeparation, but Walter, that of the ſoul. While the Counteſs was thus bewailing the imaginary misfortune of Walter, he, with all the cruel ingenuity of fraud, was labour-

ing to afflict her with real miſeries.—— Inſtead of retiring to lament his unhappineſs, he was that inſtant employed in writing a letter to the Earl, fraught with dark hints and diabolical myſtery.

This treacherous paper overtook Alan at Cyprus, and another from Matilda, filled with all the tender ſolicitude of love, reached him at the ſame time.—— He peruſed that the firſt, and kiſſing it with fervour, placed it next his heart. His hand trembled as he broke the ſeal of Walter's letter. "O Matilda," ſaid he, "this is either thy condemnation or acquittance!" He heſitated ſtill. "It is better to dream of happineſs," ſaid he, (throwing it from him) "than to awake to miſery." Another pauſe determined him. "Yet," cried he, taking it again, "this, by giving a confirmation of her innocence, may reſtore to my harraſſed boſom its wonted peace." He peruſed the fatal contents, and that peace vaniſhed for ever!

Fired

Fired with jealous rage, he ſnatched the teſtimony of Matilda's affections from his breaſt, and tore it into a thouſand pieces. "So," cried he, ſcattering the fragments, "ſo diſloyal and unchaſte, Matilda, would I treat thee and thy infamous paramour."

The ſhock was too afflicting for nature to ſuſtain; a paroxyſm of frenzy took from him all powers of judgment, and in its height he wrote the following words to Walter:

"Shall Fitz-Oſborne be the ſport of "an adultereſs? See!—ſhe points the "finger of deriſion at her credulous huſ-"band—but theſe ſmiles of joy, baſe "woman, ſhall be converted into tears "of blood!—Thou haſt a dagger, Wal-"ter—uſe it for my honour, and thy "own!"——

While the unhappy Earl was thus tortured by all the pangs of jealouſy, Walter exulted at the proſpect of ſucceſs. He knew, from various accounts, that

Europe no longer held his brother, and now began to lay aſide the maſk, which had hitherto concealed his deſigns. His viſits to the caſtle of Fitz-Oſborne became more frequent, and of longer duration; and he gradually changed the appearance of fraternal affection to ſomething more tender. He complained to Matilda of the trouble he endured, from the uncertain temper of his wife, and always concluded his invectives againſt her with ſtudied encomiums on his auditor. When he beheld her ſoftened to compaſſion, he would catch her hand, as if unconſcious of the action, and ſighing exclaim, "O, Alan, what a happineſs is thine!"

Suſpicion is the attendant of guilt, and the boſom of Matilda was equally devoid of both. She liſtened to him with complacency, and practiſed every gentle art of kindneſs, to reſtore him to the repoſe he pretended to lament. Vice has a facility

cility of imposing on itself, even where it seeks to deprive others; and Walker fancied he saw a stern passion lurk under the mask of pity. This idea, while it made him redouble his assiduities, rendered him less careful of concealing the cause; and the eye of suspicion alone could any longer mistake it.

At length weary of the shadow of restraint, he determined to disclose himself; and one day seeking the Countess, besought her to dismiss her attendants. She complied, yet wondered at the request.

"Matilda," said he, (dropping on one knee, and taking her hand), "my soul labours with a secret, the revealing of which *may* be my happiness, or my destruction! I have struggled with a powerful emotion, but it has proved too strong for my exertions. Custom has affixed the idea of criminality to what has really no affinity to guilt, and man would have those

those laws, which are the offspring of his caprice, regarded as the inspiration of divinity: but the soul of Matilda is above the prejudices of the vulgar, her discernment is too clear to be imposed on by the artifices of priestcraft, and the delusions of superstition. She will know that the emotions of the heart are involuntary, and therefore cannot be criminal;—and since not criminal, why not indulged? Beauteous Matilda, I have this heart—I feel these emotions—they are caused by thee alone, and thus prostrate at thy feet, I dare to tell my love!"

"Thy shame!" cried the Countess, starting, while the blush of virtuous indignation illumined her features. "Base sophister!—is the daughter of Hubert—the wife of thy brother, a fit object for insult? My husband—thou art far away, but I have still a protector!"

Walter, though stung to the soul, concealed his rage, and again falling at her feet,

feet. "O, Matilda," said he, "thy resentment is worse than death—thou knowest the spring of my offence—love—the most ardent love."

"Love, from thee!—the brother of my husband!—Begone—base and unworthy.—Alan—the injured Alan shall learn how thou wouldst requite his benefits."

She would have left him at these words, but he caught her robe. "Matilda," said he, in an humble tone, "thy virtues have shewn me the deformity of vice—I now see the futility of those arguments with which I would have imposed on myself and thee. My life is at thy disposal—take it as the only compensation for my crime—but I beseech thee wound not the heart of Alan by a discovery of his brother's unworthiness."

The Countess was softened. "I forgive thee," said she, "but this castle must hold thee no more, till my Lord return.

return.—Begone instantly, and may the sincerity of thy repentance merit that favour from Heaven, which thy guilt has forfeited." Walter, assuming an aspect of humility and sorrow, made a low obeisance, and retired. He quitted the castle, and when out of the reach of observation, his countenance expressed all the diabolical sensations of an abandoned soul. "Proud woman," said he to himself, "I will yet triumph over thy peevish virtue. Thy scorn has cured me, and thou shalt now exact, as a sacrifice, what love would have accepted as a favour." The promptness of his departure, and the contrition of his looks, but above all the confidence of innocence, inspired Matilda with a tranquillity which the votaries of vice can never feel. And fraught with sentiments of piety and goodness, she poured for the strengthening of his virtue, and the forgiveness of his offence. In the mean time a summons from Henry sus-

pended

peaded the execution of that diſſembler's projects.

This weak and vicious prince, always neceſſitous and always poor, now wanted the aſſiſtance of Walter to furniſh him new method of exaction, by which he might plunder from his people the dear bought fruits of their induſtry, to buriſh on ignoble pleaſures and unworthy favourites.

The firſt ſupport of a throne, the love of its ſubjects, had long been loſt to Henry, and he had now nothing left him to but their *fear*. Equal and weak reſource!—Providence has endued ſovereigns with power, for the ſole purpoſe of increaſing the happineſs and the ſecurity of mankind. When a monarch, forgetful of this indiſpenſible duty, would diveſt himſelf of the paternal character for that of a tyrant, the bands of obedience are looſed, and a nation, not habituated to ſlavery, will no longer regard him but as an idol of their own formation, which

reſiſtance

reſiſtance can reduce to its primitive inſignificance.

Henry found an apt counſellor in Walter: by his advice the papal authority was called in to dignify extortion. The King wrote a letter to the Pope, in which he renewed the ſhameful fealty which had been exacted from his ſire, and again repeated at his own coronation; and concluded, by deſiring his holineſs to diſpatch a legate to England, who might aſſiſt him in the work of forcing his refractory barons and clergy to give thoſe ſupplies, which had been ſo long withheld from his ſupplications.

The court of Rome complied with this requeſt, and a nuncio was immediately ſent over to England with full power to launch all the thunders of the church, even againſt its own members, in caſe of diſobedience. Thus armed, Henry ſet no bounds to his rapacity; the people were awed into compliance by a dread of ſpi-

ſpiritual cenſures, and the legate drained the monaſteries of thoſe rich funds which had equally ſerved the purpoſes of hoſpitality and ſplendour.

Such was the ſtate of things when Walter received that fatal mandate from his brother, which had been dictated in a moment of frenzy. He peruſed it with eagerneſs, and exulted at the ſucceſs of his artifices. To enſure the execution of future villainy, he ſhewed this letter to the King, and abuſed his ear with a feigned tale of the Counteſs's incontinence with one of her own vaſſals.—— Henry, too indolent to dive into the truth of this accuſation, and too vicious himſelf to doubt the vice of another, gave an implicit faith to his favourite's affirmation. Walter deſired that the matter might be kept ſecret, but at the ſame time obtained a power, under the royal ſignet, of puniſhing his ſiſter-in-law if her guilt was proved, by whatever means he might find expedient.

Unwar-

Unwarrantable as it is, by all the laws of juſtice and humanity, to give to the accuſer the power of a judge, the circumſtance of the times emboldened Henry to give ſuch a power, and Walter to uſe it. Attended by a numerous band of deſperate ruffians, he took his way to the caſtle of Fitz-Oſborne. The domeſtics, fearleſs of danger, ſuffered them to paſs the moat without reſiſtance, and when Walter ſaw himſelf ſurrounded by his adherents at the other ſide, he commanded the bridge to be drawn up, and placed guards at all the avenues.

Aſtoniſhed and diſmayed by this appearance of hoſtility, the ſervants of the caſtle flew to inform the Counteſs. Walter followed quick upon their ſteps. He found her in an inner apartment, fondling young Alan, who played at her feet, and pointing out his infant graces to Alice, who ſtood near.

At the ſight of Walter, the maternal ſmiles that had brightened her counte-

nance,

nance, gave place to the frowns of insulted virtue, and arising, with an aspect of severe dignity, she demanded the cause of his intrusion.

"In this read my excuse," cried he, presenting a paper. The well known characters of Alan met her view, and she pressed the superscription to her lips.—With all the eagerness of love she hastened to open it, and the contents impressed her with surprize and horror. A cold dew overspread her limbs; she gazed at those terrible words, 'till all sight was lost, and still grasping the paper in her hand, fell senseless to the earth.

Alice flew to succour her mistress.—"Stop," cried the dissembling Walter, "it were better perhaps that she no more saw the light of day; the consciousness of guilt has overpowered her." "What talkest thou of guilt?" interrupted Alice, "the soul of Matilda knows it not. Who dares accuse her?" "I *do*," answered Walter,

Walter, ſternly. "Then thou art a falſe miſcreant!" returned Alice, enraged—"God and good angels know, that my miſtreſs is more pure from ſin, than the mother that gave thee birth. What Matilda—the good, the chaſte Matilda?—Bliſters on thy ſlanderous and lying tongue!"——

"Bear that abuſive woman hence," ſaid Walter to his attendants. Four ruffians ſeized Alice. Young Alan, frightened by the ſtruggles of his nurſe, clung round her crying, and Alice getting one hand looſe claſped him ſtill cloſer to her. "Sweet Alan," ſhe cried, "they would ſlander thy mother, and murder thee.—But I will not quit thee!—they may kill me, but I will not quit thee!" At length obliged to yield to ſuperior ſtrength, ſhe was torn from the child, and hurried away to another apartment. That moment Matilda opened her eyes, and Walter commanded his attendants to retire.

The

The Counteſs retained but a confuſed remembrance of what had paſſed, but the ſight of Walter, and the cries of Alice, which reſounded through the caſtle, ſoon reſtored her to freſh horrors. Young Alan crept towards her, and hid his face in her boſom.

"Dear child they will not injure thee," ſaid the Counteſs, kiſſing his forehead, "be ſtill, ſweet infant, thy mother is the only victim aimed at."——"Tell me," added ſhe, riſing, "what means this horrible myſtery?—Why am I called an adultereſs?—Why is the dagger to drink my blood?—Is it Alan—Is it my huſband who commands this?—O Heaven!—Yet I do not deprecate the blow—Strike then, Walter, but firſt tell me, why I am accuſed:—Suffer me to clear my fair fame, and then take a life which I value no longer, ſince Alan would deſtroy it!"

"And yet thou canſt love this barbarian,"—anſwered Walter, "thou canſt

love

love him, and ſpurn me, inflexible Matilda!—See, I fall at thy feet, I offer thee fame, life and liberty, it is in my power to withhold them, but I give them to thee at the price of love."

"O Heaven!" cried Matilda, with an accuſing look, "is it thus that thou protecteſt thy votaries? ſhall vice lord it over virtue? Wilt thou uphold the wicked and cruſh the innocent?"

"Call not on Heaven," ſaid Walter, "thy fate is in my hands—ſee by my power and thy weakneſs, the futility of the thing thou ſtileſt virtue. My ſchemes whom thou thinkeſt vicious have proſpered; I have impoſed on the credulous Alan, and I have caught thee in the ſnare. No mortal can now deliver thee from my power, and Heaven is at reſt. Return my love, and thy fame ſhall be white and unſpotted as the new-fallen ſnow. But if thy pride refuſes my happineſs, if thy brow is ſtill clothed in diſdain, and thy eye

eye ſtill averted with hate, think not I will continue to ſupplicate as a ſlave what I may command as a maſter. Nay more, thy life and thy fame ſhall be ſacrificed to my ſecurity."

"Baſe wretch!" cried the Counteſs, "doſt thou think I will relinquiſh the reality of honour for the ſhadow?" "I leave thee to conſider," anſwered Walter, paſſing out and ſecuring the door of the chamber.

The unhappy Matilda, overwhelmed with horror and grief, ſtood motionleſs for ſome time in all the ſilent agony of deſpair. At length throwing herſelf on her knees, "O God of mercy," cried ſhe, in an accent of anguiſh, "art thou deaf to my miſery?—wilt thou ſuffer the wicked to triumph?—Where are thy avenging bolts, thy forked lightnings—are they reſerved for the innocent alone?" Young Alan, trembling and in tears, claſped his little hands around the Counteſs's neck.

neck. "My babe, my tender babe," cried ſhe, preſſing him to her, "thou haſt the features of thy father, but not his cruelty—thou wouldſt ſoften my diſtreſs by thy innocent careſſes, and he—O Heaven—Fitz-Oſborne—would plunge a dagger in my breaſt! Yet the time may come, when thou too ſhalt regard the memory of thy mother with deteſtation, when the ſound of her name ſhall inſpire thee with diſguſt, becauſe thou wilt imagine it connected with infamy. O God, ſhall the darling of my boſom execrate his tender parent? Eternal and Almighty Being, wilt thou ſuffer ſuch impiety?"

At theſe words, the wretched Matilda ſunk exhauſted on the floor. A dying languor invaded her frame, her lips ceaſed to utter exclamations, and her eyes now fixed in their ſockets, and now gazing wildly round, proved alone that her body was yet animated.

In a little time her perſecutor again appeared, and his preſence gave her the vigour

vigour of resentment. By an involuntary emotion she caught young Alan to her arms, and that action inspired Walter with fresh hope. "Say, beauteous Matilda," said he, prostrating himself before her, "am I still to deplore thy cruelty, or hast thou determined my happiness?" "I have determined to die," replied she in a tone of dignity, "and to die virtuous.—Give me death—a husband requires it, and I shrink not at the stroke."

"'Tis well"—returned Walter, "thou art satisfied to relinquish all the dear delights of life for a fantastic good!—bethink thee that honour exists but in the opinions of men, and that thy name will descend with ignominy to posterity.—Where then is the advantage of thy virtue, if thou shalt be loaded with infamy, and I covered with renown?"

"Cease thy fallacious arguments," said the Countess, there is an ETERNAL Judge, who shall decide between thee and me!—tremble miscreant at the idea of that

ſentence, which ſhall exact a dread and terrible retribution for my ſufferings!" "Sweet pledge of my affection for a cruel huſband," added ſhe, turning to young Alan, "thy tender years will be bereft of a mother's care, but I commit thee to the protection of the all-powerful: he, who is the father of the helpleſs and the ſcourge of the wicked!"

At that moment, Walter, with the rapidity of an eagle darting on his prey, caught up the child. The Counteſs uttered a piercing ſhriek, "Barbarian," ſhe exclaimed, "thou wilt not murder my babe, the darling of my ſoul?" "His fate is in thy hands," anſwered he, with an inſulting air. "See," cried ſhe, kneeling —"ſee to what thou haſt humbled me!— Drench thy dagger in my blood—but ſpare the precious life of my infant.—— My child—my innocent child—I pray thee ſpare him!"

"I will cheriſh him in my boſom," ſaid Walter, "if thou art kind." "No, recreant,"

recreant," exclaimed the Countess rising, "no—I will debase myself no more by supplications. May all the horrors of Hell surround thee, if thou attempt to hurt my son!" "Thus I brave them," cried Walter, pulling forth a dagger, and holding it to young Alan's breast. Matilda in all the wildness of despair rushed upon him, and received the deadly point in her bosom. A purple tide issued from her heart, she staggered and fell. For the first time her base destroyer felt the sting of remorse. "It is done," said she in a faint voice, "be satisfied with one victim." Walter attempted to succour her, but she repulsed him with horror.

"Leave me to die," said she, "thou hast calumniated my fame, and the blood thou hast shed shall rise in judgment against thee!—but my child—one sweet embrace." She attempted to raise herself. At the same moment the last breath for-

ſook her lips, and ſhe fell, lovely, even in death.

That ſight penetrated the obdurate ſoul of Walter. Her words had ſtruck him with horror, and already he imagined himſelf ſurrounded by avenging furies. Poſſeſſed by this idea, he uttered loud and frantic cries, and his adherents, alarmed, haſtened to the ſcene of death. Though accuſtomed to villainy, they recoiled at this dreadful ſpectacle. That action reſtored Walter to his uſual diſſimulation.

"A ſelf accuſing conſcience," cried he, "has anticipated juſtice; this unhappy woman has inflicted on herſelf the puniſhment with which I was intruſted. Bear hence the corſe, let it be immediately interred, ſince her laſt action has precluded the rites of our holy religion. The ruffians obeyed this order, and carried the remains of the injured Matilda to the moſt hidden part of the foreſt; there having dug a pit and thrown in the body,

body, they covered it with earth and returned to await the further commands of their ſuperior.

Mean time, Walter releaſed Alice from her confinement, and gave young Alan to her charge. The firſt uſe ſhe made of her recovered freedom, was to fly to the Counteſs's apartment: but with what horror was ſhe ſeized to ſee the floor crimſoned with blood, which a fatal preſage told her, was that of her miſtreſs. She called on the name of Matilda, and was only anſwered by a ſullen echo.—"Lady, beloved lady," cried ſhe in the madneſs of anguiſh, "they have murdered thee, ſweet lady!—fooliſh Alan, ſmile not—they have ſhed the blood of innocence—they have killed thy mother." At theſe words ſhe ruſhed out in ſearch of Walter, but he had already quitted the caſtle. Furious from ſuſpence, ſhe would have precipitated herſelf and the child into the moat; but the

followers of Walter prevented that rashneſs, and forcibly carrying her into the caſtle, cloſed the gates and ſet a ſtrict watch over her.

Let us now return to the author of theſe horrors. That ſhort-lived remorſe that had poſſeſſed him, ſoon gave place to an anxiety for his ſafety. Inſtead of going to his own dwelling, he made the beſt of his way to Wincheſter, where the King then held his court. Walter ruſhed into Henry's preſence, and proſtrated himſelf at his feet. "My liege," ſaid he, holding out the mandate of Matilda's death, "this commiſſion was uſeleſs; the unhappy Counteſs has added ſuicide to the number of her crimes!"

The attendants of Henry, ſurpriſed at theſe words, regarded each other with looks of ſuſpenſe and doubt. "Thy honour then is ſatisfied,"—replied the King—"and thou art ſaved the pain of avenging it." That anſwer inſpired Wal-

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ter with confidence, but concealing his ſatisfaction and aſſuming a countenance of ſorrow and confuſion, he related to the aſſembled courtiers the fallacious tale, which had already impoſed upon the King. Thoſe who had ſeen Matilda the brighteſt ornament of the court, and were acquainted with her virtues, gave ſmall credit to this fiction. But the recent diſgrace of John De Burgh, her kinſman, from whom the King had wreſted his Iriſh poſſeſſions, and above all the power of the favourite, prevented them from declaring their opinions; and they joined with one voice in condemning the imaginary crime of the Counteſs, and applauding the reſentment of her brother-in-law.

Secure of impunity from this quarter, Walter turned his thoughts to the commiſſion of new enormities. The love he had entertained for Matilda expired with its object, and envy and avarice, the pre-

vailing propenſities of his ſoul, now exerted their full influence. Not ſatisfied with the honours and the wealth, which royal favour had poured upon him, he thirſted for the poſſeſſion of Fitz-Oſborne's inheritance. His baſe heart ſuggeſted that the chief obſtacle which intervened to the accompliſhment of his wiſhes, was the life of his brother, and he determined to deſtroy it: Well acquainted with the impetuoſity of the Earl's diſpoſition, he hoped that the effects of returning love and ſudden remorſe might ſave him the commiſſion of actual murder, and to that intent diſpatched the following letter to that injured noble.

THE LETTER.

" MATILDA is no more!—her own
" hand has avenged thee. I draw a veil
" over this ſcene of horror; let it ſuf-
" fice that I tell thee, her laſt breath
" implored a bleſſing on thy head, and
" aſſerted

"asserted her innocence! Yet I knew it
"to be tainted—but still thou wast too
"precipitate! In the gloom of a cloyster
"she might have lamented her frailty,
"and Heaven perhaps had accepted the
"tears of penitence, as a sufficient atone-
"ment. My brother, she was guilty—
"but I beheld that bosom, once so
"beauteous, discoloured with gore.——
"I saw those eyes, once brilliant as the
"star of morn, clouded with the mist
"of death! She was guilty—but sui-
"cide—I tremble!—Thou art avenged,
"my brother. Her offence is expiated
"in her blood—be thou at peace."

Trusting in the effects of this letter, Walter acted as if he were already possessed of the Earl's estates. The flower of Fitz-Osborne's vassals had followed him to the holy land, none remained, but *those* whose decrepid age or tender youth incapacitated them for the toils of war.

From ſuch opponents Walter had nothing to apprehend, and the domeſtics of the caſtle were ſoon gained over to his intereſt by mercenary or fearful motives. The faithful Alice alone ſpurned at his preſents, and derided his authority:—confined to an apartment in the caſtle ſhe ſpent whole days in mourning over young Alan, and execrating the deſtroyer of his mother.

At length her apprehenſions for the ſafety of this child induced her to that ſubmiſſion, which a fear for her own could never have exacted. Walter, incenſed by her inceſſant reproaches, threatened to diſmiſs her from the charge with which ſhe was intruſted, and from that time the ſorrow that preyed upon her heart vented itſelf no more in complaints; ſhe wept in ſecret, and ſmiled before the oppreſſor.

This diſſimulation, ſo neceſſary, procured her a greater degree of freedom; ſhe

ſhe was permitted to wander through the domains, though ſpies were ſtill placed over her ſteps. The calmneſs of her behaviour, during theſe excurſions, precluded all ſuſpicion, and the vigilance of her guards relaxed imperceptibly. One evening, when ſecure of being unſeen, ſhe gave a looſe to the melancholy that oppreſſed her. Led by an irreſiſtible impulſe ſhe advanced to the foreſt, and penetrated through the thickeſt ſhades. At length wearineſs and grief compelled her to ſtop, and ſeating herſelf and young Alan on the ground, ſhe meditated on the myſtery that ſhrouded Matilda's fate.—All at once a mound of earth at ſome diſtance, yet freſh and bare of verdure, attracted her eyes. "O Heaven!" cried ſhe, riſing, "is this the grave of my miſtreſs?" In approaching it ſhe perceived ſomething glitter in a neſt of brambles, and ſtooping, diſcerned the tablets of the Counteſs. Uttering a piercing and

frantic

frantic ſhriek, ſhe precipitated herſelf on the grave.

"Sweet lady," ſhe cried, "is this then thy burial place?—Is this cold earth the habitation of the virtuous De Burgh? Heareſt thou the wailings of thy faithful Alice—ſeeſt thou the ſcalding tears that bedew her cheeks?—Alas, no.——Dear lady, thou heareſt, thou ſeeſt no more!—in the pride of thy youth, in the prime of thy beauty, thou art become a prey to corruption!—But, lady, thou ſhalt have an avenger—the child of thy boſom ſhall exact blood for blood."——"See thoſe hands, O God," cried ſhe (extending young Alan's on the grave) "make them the inſtruments of retribution, intruſt them with the ſword of juſtice—let it terrify the ſoul of Walter, and be plunged in his heart."

At that inſtant, a ſudden gleam of light ſhot acroſs the grave. The trees ſhook with violence, though the air remained

mained calm and unagitated. Alice, trembling, put the tablets in her bosom, and taking young Alan in her arms, haſtened out of the foreſt with tottering ſteps. The hours which nature had allotted for repoſe, did Alice paſs in all the bitterneſs of ſorrow. As ſoon as morning dawned ſhe opened the tablets, and found the following words inſcribed within them:

"Author and eternal Fountain of all "Good; attend to the petition of thy "ſervant, baniſh from the boſom of Wal"ter that criminal love I have ſo fatally "inſpired; a love which diſhonours me, "and equally offends thy laws. Reſtore "him to virtue, to gratitude, to the feel"ings of paternal affection, and give "him to lament with penitential tears "the injury he would have done Fitz"Oſborne."

"O God!

"O God!" cried Alice, after peruſing theſe words, "the myſtery is then at length unravelled!—Baſe Walter—cruel and diſſembling caitiff—traitor to thy knightly vows!—thou haſt ſlandered the innocent, and plunged thy ſword in the boſom of the helpleſs!" Here her voice became ſuffocated with ſobs; ſhe embraced young Alan, bedewed his face with her tears, and when the violence of her emotions had in ſome meaſure ſubſided, looked again at the tablets. "Yes, my miſtreſs," ſhe cried, "thou ſhalt be avenged—this dire and fatal ſecret ſhall ſleep in the breaſt of Alice 'till Fitz-Oſborne returns to his native land. Then ſhall the cowardly ſpirit of Walter ſhrink within him—then ſhall his baſe blood be poured forth to appeaſe thine!"

While Alice thus indulged in the effuſions of grief and indignation, Walter waited in ſuſpence and anxiety the event of his letter. A year thus paſſed in expectation,

peſtation, when ſuddenly a rumour aroſe that the Earl had fallen in battle. More authentic accounts ſoon arrived, and the certainty of his death was at once announced and lamented.

It was ſaid, that on the fatal day which had put a period to his life, he had ſeemed animated more by the rage of deſpair, than the thirſt of conqueſt. That with irreſiſtible force he had pierced through the thickeſt ranks of the enemy, and laid whole heaps of ſlaughtered infidels at his feet: Till at length, hemmed in on all ſides, oppreſſed and overpowered, he had fallen, mangled with a thouſand wounds. This intelligence inſpired Walter with a ſavage joy, which he ſtrove in vain to conceal. One bar yet remained to the accompliſhment of his deſires, and that was the exiſtence of young Alan. The idea of a new crime ſtartled not a ſoul familiarized to guilt, but fear acted in the place of pity, and told him that the

the catastrophe of the Countess, now received as he had represented it, might be enquired into, if he embrued his hands in the blood of her offspring.—That thought restrained him, but he still panted for the possessions of Fitz-Osborne, and his invention, fertile in vicious schemes, soon suggested a method to obtain them.

A wealthy vassal of his brother's had once a daughter named Adela, the favourite companion of Alan in his boyish days. Unmindful of the distinctions of birth and rank, this unhappy maiden cherished an ardent passion for him who had been her play-mate, and the love of Adela for Lord Alan, became the chief topic of discourse with all the village youth. It at length reached the old Earl's ear, and he trembled at the apprehension of his son's being equally enamoured. But Lord Alan yet knew not what it was to love; glory occupied his soul

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the place of softer sensations: he therefore readily assented to the Earl's command, who wished him to repair to court, where the reception he met was as flattering as his merits were eminent. This absence wounded the peace and health of the wretched Adela. No longer able to partake of rural sports, she wasted those hours in sighs and tears which her sprightly companions devoted to rustic dances on the shaven green.—Like the beauteous flower, which enlivened by the influence of the sun, expands its glossy leaves to the eye, and again closes them when deprived of his chearing beams, so the beauties of Adela, to which the presence of Alan had given life and lustre, sunk, languished, and faded at his departure.

After becoming Earl of Fitz-Osborne, he beheld the fair Matilda, and his imagination lost every trace of her whom he had never loved. His union with that

lady

lady was too ſevere a ſtroke for the tender Adela to ſupport; a haſty decline quickly put a period to her woes and her exiſtence. The Earl heard of her death, recollected her love, and gave a tear to her memory, as ſome compenſation for the injury he had unwillingly occaſioned; he took Maurice, her father, into high favour and confidence: but this man, by nature baſe, ſaw in Alan not his benefactor, but the deſtroyer of his child.—At the news of his deceaſe, Maurice exulted as at the fall of an hated enemy, and Walter, who was no ſtranger to his ſentiments, beheld in him a fit inſtrument for his project. Both had ſhortly an interview, and avarice joined to a deſire of affixing a ſtain on the memory of the Earl, induced Maurice to a ready compliance.

When every thing was concerted, Walter returned to his own habitation, and Maurice haſtened to court. He deſired

to

to be connected to the King, as having an affair of much consequence to communicate. When brought into Henry's presence, he prostrated himself at his feet, and continued silent. The King surprised at this behaviour, commanded him to speak. "Yes, my liege," cried he in a perturbed tone, "yes, I will speak, and may Heaven prosper my words as they are sincere. I had once a daughter, beauteous as the rising morn, and lively as the bounding roe. She was my only wealth; and treachery, most cruel treachery has rendered me poor indeed!—Alan of Fitz-Osborne beheld my child, and by artful blandishments practised upon her unwary soul to return him love for love; yet his persuasions could not seduce her to dishonour; and she refused to be engaged to him by any other ties than the holy ones of wedlock. Finding her inflexible, he lodged a solemn contract in her hands, which bound him

to

to take her alone for wife as ſoon as his father's death ſhould give him liberty to follow his own inclinations. My child was enſnared in the meſh of deceit, and her life became a prey to it. The demiſe of his ſire rendered Alan, Earl of Fitz-Oſborne, and our maſter. Far from accompliſhing his promiſe, he contrived by various artifices to poſſeſs himſelf of the contract, and immediately after, quitting the manſion of his anceſtors, remained in the purſuit of glory (for he was brave though a deceiver) during the ſpace of ſome years. At the end of that career, he beheld the daughter of Hubert, and ſcorned the lowly Adela. In fine, my liege, his marriage with Matilda ſunk my wretched daughter to the tomb."—"And why was not this revealed before?" interrupted the King. "My liege," anſwered Maurice, "he was my maſter, could the poverty of a vaſſal cope with the power of a noble?—I was oppreſſed, but

but his death has set me free. I ask not retribution since Adela is gone for ever, but I desire revenge upon his memory and his name; and never will I render a shameful obedience to the son of Matilda, the usurper of my daughter's rights.—Here, O King, do I demand in the name of justice and the law, that the illegitimate son of Fitz-Osborne shall not inherit his possessions."

"Hast thou proof for this," said Henry, "I have my liege," answered Maurice. "Let the papers of Fitz-Osborne be searched forthwith, and if the contract is not found, then let me die the death of a traitor." "It shall be as thou sayest," said the King, "and we will have thee put in close durance, 'till this truth or thy falsehood be manifest." "I am content," replied Maurice.

Henry, unknowing yet how to judge, ordered him to be kept under strict custody 'till called for, and in the mean time dis-

diſpatched a courier to Walter, requiring his immediate attendance. That baſe deſigner readily obeyed the ſummons, and the King imparted to him what he had heard. Walter, well ſkilled in fraud, aſſumed an appearance of anger, and demanded to ſee the caitiff, who dared abuſe his brother's fame. The King refuſed the requeſt, but promiſed that Maurice ſhould meet the fate he deſerved, if his aſſertion was proved to be void of truth.

Walter, ſtill ſeemingly impatient, deſired that ſince this was denied, the King would on the inſtant command three of his principal courtiers to accompany him to the caſtle of Fitz-Oſborne. Henry complied, and the Lords Arundel, De Gray, and Saliſbury were ordered to attend him.

During the continuance of that journey, Walter breathed nothing but reſentment and vengeance againſt Maurice.—As he entered the caſtle, "Now," cried he, "vile wretch, ſhall the fame of Fitz-Oſborne

Osborne be cleared, and thou convicted of falsehood!" saying this, he hastily traversed the apartments, and his companions followed. Nothing escaped their scrutiny, yet the object of search remained still undiscovered. At length the Lord Salisbury passing into an inner appartment, espied a small casket covered over with dust. This was instantly opened, and from under some other papers which it contained, Lord Arundel pulled forth the contract.

At that sight, Walter assumed a countenance of dismay and confusion, and made a motion as if he would have torn it in pieces, but Lord Arundel, snatching it from his grasp, saluted him Earl of Fitz-Osborne.

"O title, grating to my ears, since I gain thee by the dishonour of a brother!" exclaimed Walter in a tone of grief.—"Return, my Lords," pursued he, "return and give the King an account of our fatal

fatal commiſſion:—For me, I cannot bear you company, my ſoul is torn by ſorrow and indignation—ſorrow that my brother ſhould have lapſed from the path of virtue, and indignation that the name of Fitz-Oſborne ſhould be called to ſhame!"

Impoſed upon by this artifice, the credulous nobles took their way to court, carrying with them the contract, and impreſſed with aſtoniſhment at the fraud of the Earl, and with admiration of Walter's diſintereſted ſentiments. The Lord De Gray, ſecretly pleaſed at this acceſſion of power and wealth to his ſon-in-law, was the firſt to relate to Henry what happened: upon which Maurice was releaſed from confinement, and on demanding the contract, received it.

A parliament, which the King had called for other purpoſes ſome time before, now took cognizance of this affair—Maurice, in the preſence of this aſſembly, depoſed to the truth of his former aſſeveration,

verations, and notwithstanding the inconsistencies with which his allegation teemed, [illegible] The manifest wishes of the king, and the mean acquiescence of the nobles, produced an act which excluding young Alan from the honours and possessions of his family under the stigma of illegitimacy, conferred them on his uncle.

Walter, though now successful in all his designs, still relinquished not his wonted hypocrisy.——Far from seeming elated at this sudden good fortune, he arrayed himself and his family in mourning weeds upon the passing of the act. He delayed not however to possess himself of the castle of Fitz-Osborne, which was much more magnificent, as well as more commodious, than his late habitation, and shortly removed his household to that place. It is time that we now return to the afflicted Alice and her injured charge. That faithful creature had

heard of the Earl's death, and the events which ſucceeded it, with grief and indignation. Well convinced from the tenor of Walter's actions that the ſtory of the contract had no other origin than his own invention, ſhe execrated him afreſh, but diſſimulation was now become more neceſſary than ever, and ſhe ſet a careful watch over her countenance and lips.

Walter, pleaſed with the moderation of her conduct, ſtill permitted her attendance on young Alan, whom he now affected to treat with a redoubled tenderneſs mingled with compaſſion, and oft declared his education ſhould be equally attended to with that of his own ſon, Lord William.

The new Counteſs, ignorant from what motive this kindneſs ſprung, and being herſelf of a parſimonious and illiberal diſpoſition, tried to counteract what ſhe imagined her huſband's real intentions, by a ſeries of harſh and contumelious

uſage

uſage towards the fancied object of his affection. Mean time that child, who had entered his ſixth year, daily improved in beauty and in ſpirit. The young Lord William, though older by ſome months, equalled him not either in bodily or mental endowments, but following the leſſons of his mother, ſought all occaſions to treat him with an haughty air of conſcious ſuperiority, which the inborn and noble pride of Alan could ill brook.

Seven years more paſſed away without any material incident or alteration, but at the end of that time an occurrence happened, which, though trifling in itſelf, inſpired Walter with the moſt dire reſolutions againſt the victim of his deceit.

One day as Lord William and Alan, with ſome peaſant children, played in the court of the caſtle, a boy named Gerald, having a diſpute with another of ſuperior ſtrength, received a blow which

felled him to the earth; and in attempting to ariſe was attacked by two more, who took part with his antagoniſt.

Alan, deteſting the inequality of the combat, flew to Gerald's aſſiſtance, and commanded the aſſailants to deſiſt: but inſtead of obeying, they redoubled their ſtrokes; and Lord William advancing, aſked Alan, with an air of haughtineſs, why he who was only a dependent on his father's bounty preſumed to exert any authority over thoſe who were equal to himſelf?—

Alan, replying not but by a glance of diſdain, raiſed Gerald, and ſtriking down the aggreſſor, quickly compelled the other two to retreat; then turning to Lord William—"Am I not the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne?" ſaid he, frowning.—— "Yes, but baſe-born," returned Lord William, with a ſneer. "My mother was noble as thy own," reſumed Alan, in an elevated voice; "and if for her miſ-

fortune,

fortune, and for mine, my ſire committed one deed of baſeneſs, yet I am ſtill ſuperior to thee, who are both unjuſt and unworthy."

Lord William, fired with anger at theſe words, pulled forth a ſmall poinard which ſtuck in his belt, and ruſhing furiouſly on Alan, would have plunged it in his breaſt: but he ſlipping nimbly on one ſide avoided the ſtroke, and ſeizing the guard of the poinard, wreſted it out of Lord William's hand, at the ſame time ſtriking him a blow on the face, which made a torrent of blood guſh from his mouth and noſtrils.

Some domeſtics, who had been apprized of the fray by the young peaſants, now ran towards them, and after ſeparating, carried them before the Earl.—— Lord William, uttering doleful ſobs and cries, accuſed Alan of inſulting him, unprovoked, with rude and threatening language, and then related the conclu-

ſion of the affair as it had truly happened.

Walter turned to Alan with a ſtern air, and enquired what he had to plead in his defence?

"My Lord," replied he, indignantly, "I ſcorn to defend myſelf againſt ſo baſe an accuſer."

"Know you of whom you ſpeak," cried Walter, frowning. "I do," reſumed Alan, "he is your ſon—but injuſtice, cowardice and falſhood, have reduced him beneath the level of your meaneſt vaſſal!"

At that moment, Walter imagined he heard the accents of Fitz-Oſborne—he looked at Alan, and beheld his living image. The blood curdled in his veins; he fancied he ſaw the ſword of vengeance ſuſpended over his head, and his limbs became ſtiff with horror.

Willing to hide his confuſion, he commanded the boys to embrace, and forget

what

what had paſſed; then haſtily retiring to a private apartment, threw himſelf on a couch, and remained for ſome moments buried in deep thought.

At length riſing, with a countenance dark and terrible, he exclaimed—"Fitz-Oſborne—Matilda—ye are avenged!"—"No," cried he, after a pauſe; "no—a ſtripling, green in underſtanding and in years, ſhall not raviſh the fruit of my labours—and perhaps my crimes. Is it thus that Heaven rewards that clemency which induced me to ſpare the life of a helpleſs infant?—Heaven—what have I to do with the dreams of prieſtcraft?—Weak and fooliſh mercy—to deſtroy the parents and ſave the child.—Ha!—have I preſerved him who may become my aſſaſſin?—He ſhall die—his blood ſhall reſtore my tranquility!"

While the uſurper held this ſoliloquy, Alice had heard of the fray, and trembled for the conſequence. She haſtened

to ſeek Alan, and taking him apart, thus his impetuoſity—"What," cried he, "ſhall I crouch beneath the inſolence of Lord William?—Shall I tamely ſuffer him to inſult me with the misfortune of my birth?—No, mother—the Earl himſelf approved my conduct, and condemned that of his ſon."

"Alas, my child," cried Alice, "thou art young—thou art ignorant of the arts of diſſimulation."

"And ſtill may I continue ſo," replied Alan, in a tone full of ſpirit—"why ſhould the Earl diſſemble?—am I not dependant on his bounty—can he not caſt me from him fearleſs of reproach?"

"Bethink thee of that, my child," reſumed Alice, "and let it moderate thy raſhneſs." "No, mother," interrupted Alan, "I am not raſh—but let Lord William beware how he inſults the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne—though the Earl abandon

don me, fear not; Heaven will ſtill raiſe me a protector. True, I am yet young, but a few years will add ſtrength to my arm, and vigour to my ſoul. The harveſt of my glory is free to valour; I deſpair not to reap its laurels."

"Noble boy!" exclaimed Alice, folding him in a ſtrenuous embrace.——"O Heaven!" added ſhe, "thou haſt heard my prayers—thou haſt raiſed"—She pauſed, fearful of having ſaid too much, but Alan heeding not the interruption, returned her indearments, and beſought her to moderate her apprehenſions. During this time, the uſurper experienced all the keen ſenſations of conſcious guilt and fear. His reſolution was fixed againſt the life of Alan, but he ſtill continued in ſuſpenſe about the means of execution. One time he thought to enter his chamber in the dead of night, and commit the deed with his own hands. But a dread of the clamours of Alice

prevented him from long retaining that idea, and he at length determined to have recourſe to poiſon, which by being adminiſtered to both might ſecure him from an accuſer.

The hour of retiring now approached, and all the inhabitants of the caſtle betook themſelves to reſt. But the watchfulneſs of guilt ſat on the lids of Walter, and precluded them from cloſing. Extended on a downy couch, he lay brooding infernal machinations, and waiting impatiently for day, when he ſhould put them in execution.

About midnight, the moon ſhed a ſickly gleam of light into the apartment, and at the ſame time an owl flapping againſt the caſement, uttered an ominous ſhriek. Walter ſtarted involuntarily, and raiſing his head, beheld an object which froze his ſoul with terror.

It was the form of Matilda, pale, ghaſtly, and bloody. The fatal daggar ſtuck

in

in her breaſt; and the ſanguinary ſtream ſeemed to flow afreſh.

Large drops of ſweat burſt from the pores of Walter, his limbs became convulſed, and he attempted to draw the coverlet over his face, but the phantom approaching tore it from his graſp, and lifting up her hand with a menacing geſture, exclaimed in a ſhrill and piercing tone, "Attempt not the life of Alan!"—At hearing theſe words, Walter loſt all ſenſe, and fell into a deep and deadly ſwoon, in which he continued for a conſiderable time; at length awaking, he rolled his eye-balls wildly round, as if in ſearch of the object of his fear; but the moon had withdrawn her light, and a profound darkneſs ſhrouded the apartment. All was ſilence ſave the hollow whiſtling of the wind through the vaulted hall, and the melancholy hooting of the night bird on the battlements.

Walter,

Walter, dismayed and trembling, forsook his couch, and hastily quitted the chamber; then rousing his domestics, called for lights, in a tone that denoted terror and consternation. The Countess, alarmed by the noise threw on some loose habiliments, and advanced to the door of her apartment, whither her husband had already come. Servants now attended with lighted tapers, and the countenance of Walter, pale and imprinted with terror, striking her with amazement, she demanded the cause.

Walter replied not for some moments, but continued gazing wildly towards the chamber he had quitted; a repetition of the question brought back his wandering senses, and with a deep sigh he exclaimed, "the hour of vengeance is at hand!" These words gave new wonder to his spouse, and he, confused at their indiscretion, dismissed the servants, telling them he had been discomposed in the

manner

manner they beheld by a fearful dream. They retired at his command, but the Countess, far from being satisfied by this declaration, besought him to discover the truth. Walter, regaining his usual art, assured her he had nothing more to discover, and affected to jest at his weakness: but instead of returning to his own apartment he went into the Countess's bed, and feigned himself asleep to avoid her importunities. Yet though his eyes were closed rest had forsaken them. The words of the phantom still rung in his ear, and with fearful expectation he watched every moment to hear them repeated. The morn soon broke, and dissipated his terrors; he arose, put on his apparel, and walked out of the castle. His steps involuntarily bent towards the forest: on entering it he stopped and trembled. But suddenly resuming his courage, "What," said he to himself, "shall the spirit of Walter be subdued by

by an illuſion of the ſenſes—ſhall it be feared by the vain coinage of the imagination?" "And grant," added he after a pauſe," that the object which I ſaw, the accents which I heard owed their being to reality, not fancy. Why ſhould the injunctions of a feeble ſhade, weigh with a ſoul accuſtomed to deeds of hardineſs? If it is natural that Matilda ſhould ſeek to preſerve her ſon, it is alſo natural that I ſeek his deſtruction, ſince his ſafety is incompatible with mine. Let the airy form again appear; let it menace, its unſubſtantial exertions cannot hurt me, but I will ſecure myſelf againſt a living enemy. Matilda—Fitz-Oſborne—and Alan—ye ſhall form a ſociety in death!"

In ſpeaking thus, he turned his ſteps from the foreſt to the habitation of Maurice, who ſtill reſided on his domains, and poſſeſſed his confidence. To this man he imparted his deſign; and he, ever ready

ready in iniquity, took the execution on himself. But Walter diſcloſed not the ſcene of the preceding night, fearful that the perſon who willingly undertook to deſtroy an innocent from the hope of reward, might not yet be proof againſt ſupernatural terrors. Maurice engaged to prepare a potion which ſhould mock the force of the moſt ſovereign antidotes, and the next morn but one, was fixed on for adminiſtering it.

Walter ſpent the two intervening nights in the chamber of the Counteſs, undiſturbed, ſave by the gnawing worm of conſcience, which no ſophiſtry can ſtill. But the abſence of the phantom inſpired him with confidence, and he remained convinced it had been no more than an illuſion of the imagination.

The day, fated for a deed of horror, arrived. The deadly draught was already mixed, and the uſurper's heart panted with ſuſpence and expectation. Mean-

time

time his aſpect wore an air of ſerenity and pleaſure: he careſſed Alan, obliged Lord William (whoſe ſpirit ſtill rankled with malice) to embrace him again, and declared that day ſhould be dedicated to feſtivity, in honour of their ſecond reconciliation.

A feaſt was prepared according to his orders, and the minſtrels waited to enliven it with melody; but the Counteſs, incenſed at this ſeeming partiality for Alan, refuſed to be preſent.

Walter, nothing diſturbed by her frowardneſs, called for Alice, and ſeating her next young Alan (whom he had placed at his right hand) "we will forget diſtinctions," cried he, "this hour is ſacred to conviviality and happineſs." So ſaying he bade Lord William ſit beſide him, and made a ſign to Maurice to place himſelf at the board.

Alice, who never beheld the uſurper without dread or diſguſt, feared ſome

new

new machination under this appearance of cordiality. She cast a penetrating glance towards him, and received fresh matter for suspicion. Dissembler as he was, he could not prevent some of the emotions of his soul from appearing in his countenance. The flush of hope, and the paleness of apprehension, alternately succeeded each other, and too manifestly declared the uneasy tumult of his thoughts. Alice trembled, looked at Alan, but continued silent.

The feast approached to a conclusion; and Maurice, arising with an air of gaiety, took up a goblet of wine and presented it to the usurper. "My Lord," cried he, "behold the cup of amity, let it go round the board." "Thou sayest well," cried Walter, "and in honour to our nephew, he and his faithful Alice shall first partake of it." So saying, he held the cup to Alan, who would have declined it in deference to Lord William, but

but Walter renewing his inſtances in a more preſſing manner, he took it with a graceful air, and was raiſing it to his lips, when a ſudden thought induced him to pull back his hand, and making a low obeiſance to the uſurper, "my Lord," ſaid he, "I owe you an unlimited obedience—ſince it is your pleaſure that I drink before Lord William, I will not diſpute it, but I beſeech you ſuffer my faithful beloved Alice to taſte firſt of this beverage. I conſider her as a mother, and it is juſt that I pay her the reſpect which that name exacts."

The action of Alan had confounded Walter, but theſe concluding words baniſhed his apprehenſions; he commended the idea, and bade Alice pledge him.

She had obſerved the perplexity of Walter, and a terrible ſuſpicion cauſed the blood to chill in her veins while Alan held the goblet. She haſtened to take it from him, and making a motion to put it

to

to her lips, let it drop as if involuntarily to the floor.

The features of Walter, before fixed in ſuſpenſe, became now animated with indignation. He darted a look full of fury at Alice, and, reproving her negligence in terms of aſperity, ruſhed out of the hall.

Alan, aſtoniſhed and offended, aroſe ſuddenly from his ſeat. "Come away mother," ſaid he, taking Alice by the hand and preſſing it. At that inſtant Walter re-entered with a compoſed air, he apologized to Alice, and condemned his own impetuoſity, but offered not to prevent her retiring, and the feaſt broke up. Alan, though pleaſed with his acknowledgment, followed his nurſe, and Walter diſmiſſing Lord William and the minſtrels, remained alone with Maurice.

Each regarded the other for ſome moments with perplexed looks, at length Walter exclaimed in a tone of vexation, "behold the reſult of thy ſcheme!"

"Say

"Say rather of thy own," replied Maurice resentfully. "Thou hast acted like a bungler," resumed Walter, not heeding his answer. "Thou shouldst not reproach me," cried the other (with a look of scorn) "since I have not thy experience in guilt." "Ha! slave—vassal," cried Walter, "knowest thou who I am?" "I do," returned Maurice, contemptuously, "I know thou art Walter of Fitz-Osborne—Earl *while I please.*"

Walter perceived he had gone too far. "Let us cease recrimination," said he, holding out his hand, "I have been wrong, and thou too hasty. The star of Alan has for once preserved him, but we will counteract its influence."

This submission pacified Maurice; he took the offered hand, and their reconciliation seemed perfect. Yet, under the appearance of amity, Walter retained a deep resentment against his confederate in

in miſchief: his fears equalled his anger: he beheld in Maurice an inſolent who had offended him, and a witneſs who could accuſe him. While their hands were yet joined—while their lips renewed the confidence that had been interrupted, Walter determined within himſelf to deſtroy the inſtrument when the work was done.

They ſeparated ſoon after, Maurice engaging to fix upon ſome new method which no accident ſhould be capable of rendering abortive; and Walter with an intention to ſeek Alice, willing to diſcover by her words and looks, whether the incident of ſpilling the cup had proceeded from chance or ſuſpicion.

While he held the foregoing conference with Maurice, ſhe had retired to her apartment with young Alan.——No ſooner had ſhe entered than her limbs, feeble and tottering, ceaſed to ſuſtain their weight, and ſhe ſunk on the floor, though without being deprived of ſenſe.

Alan,

Alan, imputing her agitation to the Earl's rude treatment, ſought to ſooth her by his endearments: Affected by his behaviour, and ſtill trembling for his life, ſhe preſſed him to her boſom with fervour.

"I have thee yet," ſaid ſhe, in an interrupted voice, "dear pledge of a beloved miſtreſs, I have thee yet in my arms!" "Be compoſed, my mother," ſaid Alan, tenderly, "the Earl repents of having inſulted thee." "Ah! would to Heaven, my child," cried Alice, and pauſed.——"What, ſays my mother?" reſumed he. "Sweet Lamb!" exclaimed ſhe, looking fondly at him,—"Sweet Lamb, thou art ſurrounded by devouring wolves!—they lie in wait to deſtroy the ſprings of thy life—they would drink thy blood, and thou haſt no ſhepherd to defend thee!" "Say not ſo, mother," returned Alan, "thy leſſons have taught me that Heaven deſerts not the innocent, and

and in what have I offended?—Who are my enemies?—Lord William is no longer ſo, and I had no other." "O Heaven," cried ſhe, "would his enmity, were all thou had to fear!"

"Is it then the Counteſs that cauſes theſe apprehenſions?—baniſh them, my mother; the Earl will not ſuffer her to hurt me."

Alice, ſtrongly affected by theſe words, could reſtrain herſelf no longer:—tears guſhed in large torrents from her eyes, and wetted the cheek of Alan, which was joined to hers. Aſtoniſhed and concerned, he ſaw there was ſomething labouring in her breaſt, which ſhe was unwilling to declare: though he ſpoke not, Alice penetrated his thoughts.——"My child," cried ſhe, wiping away her tears, "I read wonder and curioſity in thy looks." "True, mother," replied Alan, "I would know the cauſe of theſe violent emotions which both ſurprize and afflict me.—Some terrible ſecret."

"O

"O Heaven, how terrible!" interrupted Alice.——"One day thou ſhalt learn it," added ſhe, aſſuming a more compoſed air, "let this promiſe content thee, and ſeek not now to diſcover more.—— Meanwhile, know that thou haſt enemies. Truſt not in the Earl; let him remain a ſtranger to what I have ſaid, however he may attempt to gain thy confidence;—for if thou giveſt it him, thy deſtruction is ſure, and mine will follow. But above all, O my ſon, moderate that ſpirit, which though noble is imprudent; be leſs amiable if thou canſt; ſhroud thy graces with a veil of ruſticity, ſo ſhalt thou become rather an object of indifference, than of envy or of fear." "My beloved child," continued ſhe, "embracing him, "deſpiſe not my cautions; follow them, and they will at once enſure thy ſecurity, and my repoſe."

"O my mother," cried Alan, finding ſhe ceaſed to ſpeak, "thy words have redoubled

redoubled my perplexity; but I reſpect them, and will obey thee in all things, ſave diſſimulation. The Earl ſhall not learn what I have heard—but I will not ſeem otherwiſe than I am."

"Noble and virtuous boy!" exclaimed Alice, in a ſudden tranſport, "thou giveſt a leſſon to gray hairs. I bluſh for inſtructing thee to diſſemble. No, continue to be what thou art—for thou canſt never ceaſe to be lovely, and the care of Heaven!"

In ſpeaking theſe words ſhe loaded him with careſſes, and again bidding him beware of indulging the Earl's curioſity, they parted a few moments before Walter came to ſeek them.

He approached Alice with a ſmiling air, and renewed his apologies. "Ceaſe, my Lord," cried ſhe, "to oppreſs me with your goodneſs; it becomes not a lowly domeſtic to require humiliation from her maſter. It is I who ſhould ſue for

pardon, ſince by my negligence the harmony of the feaſt was diſturbed." She ſpoke theſe words in ſo natural a manner, that even Walter was deceived. He gave over all thoughts of farther ſcrutiny, and well pleaſed not to have incurred ſuſpicion, ſuffered her to leave him.

That night, as the two preceding, he repoſed in the Counteſs's apartment, and ſleep for a ſhort time viſited his eye-lids. He was awaked by a fearful and diſcordant craſh, which induced him for a moment to imagine that the roof had fallen on his head. He ſtarted, and ſtirred the Counteſs, but ſhe continued in a deep ſlumber; finding her immoveable, he thought of Matilda, and ſhuddered.

Immediately a ſudden light illuminated the chamber, and the phantom ſtood beſide him. The fire of indignation ſhot from her eyes;—ſhe drew forth the dagger from her boſom, and holding it over the head of Walter, cried in a terrible

and

and menacing voice—"Behold thy fate!" At the ſame inſtant ſome drops of blood ſeemed to fall from the blade upon his breaſt. Seized with horror, he attempted to ſhake them off, and the phantom aſſumed a ſmile of ſcorn.

"Thou feareſt not to ſhed blood," ſaid ſhe, "yet ſhrinkeſt at the ſight; but know that thy own ſhall flow!" In ſaying thus, ſhe again ſhook the dagger, a freſh ſtream poured from its point, the light gave place to darkneſs, and he ſaw no more.

At that moment his ſpouſe awoke, ſhe felt him tremble with ſuch violence as ſhook the couch, and enquired if he was indiſpoſed.

"Didſt thou not ſee the blood!" cried he, graſping her hand? "Call back thy ſenſes," ſaid the Counteſs, "they wander." "Sleep not," exclaimed he, in a tone of horror, "I charge thee—ſleep not!"

The Counteſs now apprehending him in a ſtate of diſtraction, called loudly to her women who lay in the antichamber. "I am not mad," cried he, gueſſing her thoughts, "though I have ſeen enough to unhinge my ſoul;—ſpeak not—enquire not—leſt the blood congeal in thy veins—leſt thou turn into very ſtone!"

The Counteſs now caught the terrors of her huſband: the loud and repeated ſhrieks ſhe uttered ſoon filled the chamber with attendants. Amongſt the reſt came Alice and young Alan.

Walter, on ſeeing the latter, ſet forth a piercing cry, and covered his face.—Then ſuddenly raiſing his head, and fixing his eyes on Alan, he exclaimed in a frantic tone—"Whither doſt thou come?—I did not kill her!—ſhe ruſhed upon the dagger's point!"

Theſe words ſtruck Alan with ſurprize. The action of his nurſe redoubled it. Thrown off her guard by the tenor of the

ſcene,

ſcene, ſhe fell ſuddenly upon her knees. "My miſtreſs—my beloved miſtreſs," cried ſhe,—"accurſed be thy murderer!"

Fortunately this exclamation was alone overheard by Alan; the Counteſs and her domeſtics being buſied about Walter, who had fallen into a ſtrong convulſion.

Alice ſeeing her imprudence in the countenance of her charge, (who regarded his uncle with menacing glances), quickly aroſe, and taking him by the hand, beſought him to quit the apartment. Her entreaties had the force of commands with Alan; they retired together.

As they entered her chamber, he fell at her feet, and embraced her knees.—"My mother," cried he, in a beſeeching tone, "my mother by affection, and by gratitude, wilt thou not name the murderer of her who gave me life."

At that queſtion Alice turned pale:—She would have ſpoken, but the words died upon her tongue.—Her lips quivered—her limbs ſhook; ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, and threw herſelf on Alan's neck.

Alarmed by her agitation, and unwilling to encreaſe it, he renewed not the enquiry, but his countenance expreſſed perplexity and concern. His ſilence reſtored Alice to ſome degree of compoſure, but ſhe dreaded its ſhort continuance. A thought ſtruck her, which ſhe determined to put in execution.

Alan had ariſen, and ſhe ſuddenly aſſumed his former poſture. "Child of my love," cried ſhe, reſiſting his endeavours to raiſe her, "Child of my love, and of my hopes, behold me at thy feet—ſee the drops of anguiſh in mine eye—give thine ear to the application of my heart, and reſtore it to repoſe!" "Dear mother," interrupted Alan, "why this adju-

adjuration? Can I be diſobedient? is not thy will my own?" "Ceaſe urging me to divulge what thou muſt not know without incurring thy deſtruction," returned Alice, "and I accept that forbearance, as the beſt proof of thy obedience."

"Moſt difficult the proof!"—cried Alan, "but I give it thee my mother. Ariſe, and ſhame me no longer with this poſture of humiliation."

The eyes of Alice ſparkled.——She aroſe, caught him to her breaſt, and imprinted a thouſand kiſſes on his cheek. Their endearments were interrupted by a domeſtic, who informed them of the Earl's being ſeized with a delirium, in which, amongſt many incoherencies, he made often mention of Alan and Matilda. Alan ſtarted, and took three ſteps to the door. But Alice following quick, caught his arm—"Stay, my child,"—cried ſhe, with a ſupplicating accent,—

"I myſelf will go to the Earl's apartment; do thou await my return."

Without ſtaying for an anſwer, ſhe purſued her purpoſe, but was denied admittance by the Counteſs.

The wild ravings of Walter had diſcloſed to that lady ſome part of a myſtery which had of late perplexed her. Affection to her huſband had long ceaſed, but ſhe now knew enough to tremble for her own intereſt, and that of Lord William. Not ſatisfied with excluding Alice, ſhe permitted no perſon to remain in the apartment, but one woman, whom ſhe imagined attached to her by principle and affection. Yet ſhe was here deceived. A character ſuch as hers could not inſpire the latter, and her own conduct precluded the former in her attendants. The affectation of virtue, which ſhe now aſſumed, and which manifeſted itſelf chiefly in defamation, kept the fault of her youth ſtill alive to remembrance; and

and while her domeſtics deſpiſed her for the one, they deteſted her for the other.

Walter continued in a delirium the whole of that night, and ſome part of the following day. Notwithſtanding the orders given that his indiſpoſition ſhould be kept ſecret, the rumour reached Maurice, and he forced his way into the chamber of the uſurper, juſt as he had returned to his ſenſes. The Counteſs would have prevented him from approaching the couch of Walter, but he, in a faint voice, and making a motion with his hand, bade him draw near, and deſired all others to quit the room.

When Maurice found himſelf without witneſſes, aſſuming the voice and looks of a perſon who had ſome pleaſure to communicate, he informed Walter that he had now fixed upon a method to rid him of all apprehenſion.

The uſurper underſtood him; but far from diſplaying any token of joy, his countenance took a paler hue, and his eyes, before ſunk and ſpiritleſs, now gleamed with frenzy and horror. He claſped his hands twice, and then pulling Maurice towards him, whiſpered in his ear—"The blood of Matilda ſpeaks—it guards the life of Alan!"

Maurice drew back aſtoniſhed;—he imagined the delirium returned, and was going to call for aſſiſtance. Walter ſtopped him:—"Liſten to my words," cried he, "I do not rave.—Attempt not the life of Alan!—this was the injunction of Matilda, and it is mine alſo."

The Counteſs entered at that inſtant, and Maurice retired from the couch, impreſſed with wonder. But it was not of long duration; after muſing ſome time, he imagined that the words he had heard ſprung from the imbecillity of diſeaſe; and concluded, that returning health

health would prove this to be a temporary change.

The diſpoſition of Walter rendered the idea reaſonable, but in the preſent inſtance it was not juſt. He recovered his ſtrength in a few days, yet terror ſtill poſſeſſed his ſoul, and harraſſed his private moments.

The form of Matilda, the blood dropping from the dagger, haunted his imagination; his days were ſpent in reſtleſsneſs, and his nights in fears. Things in themſelves inanimate, added to his terrors; every paſſing breeze ſeemed to bear the wailings of complaining ghoſts, every ruſtling leaf was transformed into a ſpectre by his tortured fancy. But above all, the ſight of Alan tormented him; ſuperſtition prevented him from forming any new machination againſt his life, yet he ceaſed not to wiſh his death. Religion would have taught repentance, but Walter knew not religion. Hail! thou

firſt gift of Heaven—thou ſoftener of human calamities! may my heart never ſwerve from thy dictates, nor my boſom want thy conſolation. Thou ſcatterest roſes in the thorny path of adverſity;—the pale children of diſtreſs, rouſed by thy chearful accents, lift up their heads and ſmile!

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

BOOK

BOOK THE SECOND.

WALTER, at this time, beſides the terrors of imagination, had other apprehenſions to ſtruggle with. Theſe were cauſed by the partiality of the King for William de Valence, whom he loaded with every honour it was in his power to beſtow.

Walter dreaded that his long ſtay in the caſtle had eraſed him from the remembrance of Henry, and made way for the new favourite to his affections. He heard with pleaſure, that De Valence was the object of general deteſtation, and a riſing hope that his own preſence was alone

alone neceſſary to cruſh him for ever, determined him to reviſit the court ſpeedily. He purſued his intention, and was well received; but diſcovered that his fears were better grounded than his hopes, ſince it was manifeſt though the King ſeemed pleaſed with his preſence, he gave him but the ſecond place in his affections.

The late and the preſent favourite regarded each other with jealouſy and diſtruſt. Hatred ſucceeded, and while De Valence ſought to ruin Walter in the opinion of the King, he again tried every method in his power to render his adverſary the object of univerſal diſlike.

The behaviour of Valence forwarded the deſign of his enemy; attached not by birth to the nation he oppreſſed, its complaints affected him neither with compaſſion or remorſe. Henry, meantime, approved of all his meaſures, and concurred in all his ſteps.

This

This ſhameful preference, joined with many illegal evaſions of juſtice, at length totally alienated from that monarch, the love, and even the reſpect of his ſubjects. Their ſecret wiſhes and their open clamours pointed to Simon Montfort, Earl of Leiceſter, as the only perſon who could ſave the ſtate, and render the people happy.

That crafty noble only waited for the ſignal. He was ſon to the famous general who had commanded againſt the Albigenſes of Savoy, and had formed an alliance with the throne, by marrying the widow of Lord Pembroke, ſiſter to Henry.

His power, though great, was equalled by his addreſs. All ranks of people, allured by his affability, or won by his promiſes, looked up to him as their deliverer from oppreſſion.

Senſible of his influence, he diſdained to cultivate the favour of the King, whoſe perſon he hated, and whoſe conduct he

deſpiſed,

deſpiſed. Nay, ſo little did he court his friendſhip, or dread his enmity, that once when Henry called him traitor, he dared to give his ſovereign the lie, and proceeded ſo far as to tell him, that did he not poſſeſs that ſacred name, he would oblige him to repent the inſult.

But the character of Leiceſter was miſtaken, far from ſeeking to redreſs the wrongs of the people, he only wiſhed for an opportunity to tyrannize over them with impunity. He had long, though ſecretly, aſpired to the throne, and knew the ſureſt method to obtain his deſire was to decry the government of Henry. He accordingly filled all places with complaints of his partiality, injuſtice, and incapacity.

Theſe complaints were too well founded, to prove ineffectual. The blaze of public indignation, a long time ſmothered, burſt forth now in all its fury, and anſwered his expectations.

Walter

Walter was not ignorant of Leiceſter's machinations, but his hatred of William De Valence induced him rather to forward than prevent them. Yet he meant not to deſert the party of the King, ſenſible that his own behaviour had ill merited the affection of the people: but he flattered himſelf, that if the favourite were once removed his own power might balance that of Leiceſter. In theſe ſentiments, and with this deſign, he courted the eſteem of Montfort, and to convince him of his attachment, gave him ſecret notice of the ſuſpicions of Valence, and the fears of Henry.

The project of Leiceſter, now ripe for execution, was haſtened by the counſel of his pretended aſſociate. He called a meeting of the moſt conſiderable barons, and concealing his ambition under the maſk of public virtue, repreſented to them the neceſſity of reforming the ſtate. He exaggerated the violation of their privileges,

ges, the continued plunder of the clergy, the oppreſſions of the commonalty, and the perfidy of the King. His eloquence, aided by his popularity, and his power, had its due weight. The barons entered into a reſolution of redreſſing public grievances, by taking the adminiſtration into their own hands.

Walter was made acquainted with this determination, and began to tremble for the event. Senſible that his power depended upon the King's, his firſt impulſe was to give him intelligence of the conſpiracy. But fortunately for Montfort, the hated idea of Valence recurred to his imagination, and prevented the diſcloſure. A new inſult from his enemy, ſtill more determined him againſt it.

De Valence ſecretly accuſed the Lord De Gray of treaſonable practices towards his ſovereign, and Henry, ever open to calumny, believed the matter to be true. Actuated by this belief, he cauſed the caſtle

caſtle of the ſuſpected noble to be inveſted, and his perſon ſeized.

Walter, on learning the misfortune of his father-in-law, complained to the King, but his remonſtrances had no effect, and he experienced the further mortification of hearing William De Valence caution him to take heed that his own loyalty were free from ſtain. This hint, rendered ſtill more cutting by its truth, and by a ſupercilious ſmile which he obſerved on the countenance of the King, ſtruck deep to his heart: he perceived that his influence over Henry was loſt, and that of the preſent favourite ſecure.

This conviction made him renew his inſtances to the diſaffected party, to haſten the execution of their deſign. But Leiceſter was ſpurred on by the higher motive of ambition and the certainty of ſucceſs.

At the enſuing parliament, the confederates appeared habited in compleat armour.

armour. The King on his entrance inquired their intention: they replied, to make him their ſovereign by confirming his power, and to have their grievances redreſſed.

Henry, too ſenſible of his own weakneſs to refuſe, and too well acquainted with deceit to heſitate in giving a promiſe he meant not to obſerve, readily aſſured them of every ſatisfaction they deſired; and for that purpoſe ſummoned another parliament at Oxford to digeſt a new plan of government.

The adverſe party, well acquainted with his duplicity, placed ſome of their own body about him 'till the time of meeting. This caution prevented the arts of De Valence from taking effect, and he began to entertain the moſt terrible apprehenſions for the ſafety of his perſon.

Walter beheld his anxiety with joy, and imagined his deſtruction ſure; he ſecretly

ſecretly entreated Leiceſter to let the removal of William De Valence from the counſels of the King, be the firſt requiſition of the barons, and he was aſſured of compliance. But his intended victim ſaved himſelf by a precipitate retreat to the continent, before the parliament aſſembled.

The King now, without recourſe, found himſelf obliged to perform his engagement. The parliament met, and its firſt ſtep was inveſting twenty four barons with ſupreme authority to reform the abuſes of the ſtate, and placing Leiceſter at the head of this body.

They then proceeded to make ſome regulations of real utility to the kingdom. They ordained that four knights ſhould be choſen by each county, who ſhould examine into the grievances of their reſpective conſtituents, and attend at the enſuing parliament to declare them.

They

They commanded that three ſeſſions of parliament ſhould be held each year; that a new high ſheriff ſhould be annually elected; that no wards or caſtles ſhould be intruſted to foreigners; no new foreſts made, nor the revenues of the counties let to farm.

Theſe conſtitutions were in truth conſonant to juſtice, but the authors were deceitful: it was not the ſecurity of the people, but the eſtabliſhment of their own power that they deſigned to effect: inſtead of relinquiſhing their authority when the buſineſs of their appointment was fulfilled, they ſtudied to continue it by various pretences and delays.

Walter beheld with grief his artifices harmleſs to his enemy and hurtful to himſelf; he ſaw the power of the King undermined, and his own of conſequence ſubverted. There were few of the governing barons, who, during the height of his influence, had not been inſulted by

by his pride, or injured by his rapacity. From them therefore, he could expect neither confidence or favour. Leicester himself ceased to careſs him, when his ſervices were no longer required.

Stung with ſhame and indignation, he deſired permiſſion to retire to his caſtle, and the requeſt was granted without heſitation.

The purſuits of ambition and revenge now gave way to the gloomy horrors that had before oppreſſed him. He trembled at the ſight of his uſurped habitation.—His knees ſtiffened as he paſſed the moat, and fancy ever buſy in tormenting him, preſented to his deluded eyes a thouſand fleeting and tremendous images.

His abſence had given no regret, and his arrival cauſed no joy. The Counteſs advanced to meet him, with a cold and unconcerned countenance, Lord William followed her ſteps, and betrayed equal indifference.

But

But the features of Alan, who advanced last, were not expressive of insensibility. Not forgetful of the words of Alice, he regarded Walter with an aspect of mingled distrust and horror.

The usurper was too much occupied by his own sensations to heed those of others. Observing a fixed and gloomy silence, he walked into the castle, nor could the reiterated enquiries of the Countess oblige him to speak.

From that moment melancholy and distrust pervaded the mansion of Fitz-Osborne. The harps of the minstrels no more vibrated the sounds of pleasure; unstrung and useless they were now affixed to the walls of the solitary hall, once the seat of smiling joy and innocent festivity.

The gloomy shade of the dwelling took its colour from the master. Walter now felt the just reward of guilt; every dire sensation had taken its abode in his bosom,

ſom, and the acute ſtings of conſcience pierced him without reſpiſe or allay.

The riſing perfections of Alan, the beauties of his perſon, the graces of his deportment, and the virtues of his heart, added to the uſurper's pangs. Tormented by envy, by ſuſpicion, and by fear, his days paſſed on, unmarked by any pleaſurable emotion, and expecting no future joy.

Such are the gifts of vice to her votaries. Avoid her, ye children of humanity—enter not into her devious footſteps; the path is flowery, but deceitful. Pleaſure ſeems to gild its opening glades, but a frightful and tremendous abyſs terminates the proſpect!

At the end of three years Walter was rouſed from his ſtate of painful inactivity, by the call of ambition. The four and twenty barons had maintained themſelves during that time in an uſurped authority, and committed many outrages

on the rights of the people——Henry wholly in their power, gave a ſanction to their actions.

All true lovers of their country beheld with indignation an odious and oppreſſive oligarchy, undermining the very vitals of the conſtitution. But it was reſerved for an order, which they themſelves had introduced into the ſtate, to be the firſt in oppoſition.

The knights of the ſhire, now regularly aſſembled in a ſeparate houſe, boldly remonſtrated againſt their uſurpations.—They repreſented, that though the King had performed what was required of him, the barons had been deficient in their engagement; that to encreaſe their own intereſt and power, ſeemed the ſole purpoſe of their decrees; and finally, called upon the King's eldeſt ſon, prince Edward, to interpoſe his authority and ſave the ſinking nation.

They

They had fixed upon a deliverer, whom Providence and Nature had rendered worthy of the charge. He had attained that age which paſſes youth and commences manhood, and the nobleneſs of his ſentiments well correſponded with the dignity of his birth.

To a form manly and graceful he joined attractive manners and a virtuous ſoul. Courage, wiſdom and fortitude, were the inmates of his breaſt, and piety untainted with ſuperſtition gave a luſtre to the whole. —The people admired his qualities, and idolized his perſon. He was emitted the Delight of Mankind, and the Hope of England!

The inſolence and uſurpations of the barons had filled him with a juſt indignation, and he heſitated not to anſwer the univerſal call.

He alledged, when appealed to, that he had ſworn to the conſtitutions of Oxford, which, though contrary to his pri-

vate ſentiments, he meant not to infringe —at the ſame time he ſent a meſſage to the barons, requiring them to lay down their authority, or to expect a vigorous oppoſition.

They replied, by publiſhing a new code of laws, which, though containing nothing of real utility, was calculated to dazzle the undiſcerning multitude. In this manner, by ſtudied and illuſive pretences, they continued to maintain themſelves in power, notwithſtanding the loud clamours of the nation. The Pope himſelf beheld their uſurpations with anger, and abſolved the King, and his ſubjects, from the oath they had taken, to obſerve the proviſions of Oxford.

Walter, apprized of theſe commotions, haſtened to Prince Edward, and urged him to accept the offer of his people, by becoming their leader.

Senſible that his former treachery was not unknown to Henry, he hoped to ob-

literate

literate it from his memory by his present zeal. With this view, he sent orders to his vassals to provide themselves with military array, and bade Lord William join him speedily.

When this mandate reached the castle, Alan flew to his nurse, and informing her of the news, declared his intention to accompany Lord William.

"O my child," returned Alice, shuddering, "the tenderness of thy youth is no match for the toils of war."

"What, mother," cried he with vivacity, "shall I waste my hours in idle ease, while my countrymen obey the call of honour?—No—the son of Fitz-Osborne will emulate his glory—he will tread in the path of renown—he will assist his country and his King!"—"Yes," cried Alice, in a tone of transport, "thou art the true offspring of Fitz-Osborne!—thou inheritest his valour!—mayest thou never meet his fate!" A sad recollection

now changed her voice; she bent her knees to the ground.—"O God," cried she, faultering, "preserve this beloved pledge of noble parents! Protect him in the heat of the battle—unnerve the arms of his enemies—let their shafts play harmless around him."

"My mother, I will pray too," said Alan, kneeling beside her.—"Eternal Being," added he, in a fervent voice, "bless the faithful guardian of my youth, and ease her terrors for my safety. Give strength to my arm, and success to my sword, but above all, endue me with the power of dispensing happiness to her, who for mine has laid the surest foundation, by causing my dependance on thee."

The piety, and the affection of her charge, inspired Alice with raptures. She embraced him tenderly, and arose.—"Go my child," cried she, "inform the Countess of thy determination, and may the Almighty guide thy steps!"

Lord

Lord William manifested some displeasure on learning the refolution of his kinſman, but as the Earl had given no injunctions to the contrary, he knew it was to no purpoſe to reſiſt.

Two days after, Alan and Lord William, attended by ſome truſty domeſtics, departed from the caſtle. They arrived at Wincheſter, the fourth morning from ſetting out.

Walter advanced to meet his ſon, and was ſtruck with aſtoniſhment and diſmay at ſeeing Alan. He received him coldly, but diſguiſed his mortification. The Prince heard of their arrival, and deſired Walter to conduct them to his preſence. He obeyed with reluctance.

Lord William advanced firſt, and Edward, neither ſtruck by his perſon or addreſs, made him a ſlight inclination of his head, and paſſed on towards Alan, whoſe appearance prepoſſeſſed him in his favour.

These two young kinsmen, were indeed as different in bodily endowments, as in disposition.

The person of Lord William was ill-shaped, and awkward: his features expressive of meanness and stupidity.

The form of Alan at once denoted agility and strength—his stature was tall, his limbs finely proportioned, and his mien most graceful. His black eyes sparkled with vivacity, and his lips wore the hue of health. A profusion of dark brown hair, fell in easy ringlets on his shoulders, while a stray lock wantoned on his ruddy cheek.

He bent one knee to the Prince, who regarded him with a look of admiration, and demanded his name and parentage.

"I am the son of Alan Fitz-Osborne," answered he, "unhappy by my birth, but fortunate in the notice of your highness."

"And thy purpose?"—resumed Edward with a smile.

"To

"To devote my sword and my life to the service of my Prince," replied the son of Fitz-Osborne.

"I accept them, my young associate," said Edward, raising him with an air of kindness.

Walter bit his lips, and the indignation of his soul was redoubled, when he beheld the Prince lead his nephew into an inner apartment, with an intention of introducing him to his consort. He followed their steps in silent anguish.

"Partner of my life," said the Prince to Eleanora, "I present to thee a youth, who is worthy of thy favour." "He bears indeed the semblance of worth," returned the Princess, giving her hand to Alan with a smile of benignity. He pressed it respectfully to his lips, and prostrating himself at her feet, "When a Alan," said he, "shall cease to be grateful for the condescension of his Princess, then may he cease to exist!"

"Thou art a noble youth," said Eleanora, "arise—thou shalt be my knight."

"Sacred truſt," cried the ſon of Fitz-Osborne, "I will diſcharge it with my blood!"

Walter, though tortured by rage and envy, ſeemed tranſported with this ſcene. He turned to Alan with a ſmile of diſſembled pleaſure, and congratulating him on his good fortune, cautioned him to deſerve its continuance.

"I fear him not," ſaid the Princeſs, "the virtue of his ſoul is written in legible characters on his countenance, and thoſe ſhall be my ſecurity."

Walter, unable to reſtrain his reſentment any longer, and yet willing to conceal it, paſſed abruptly out of the apartment, followed by his ſon.

Not daring to inſult the object who had incurred his anger, he vented it upon Lord William, and after reproaching him ſeverely for ſuffering Alan to beat

him

him company to Winchester, commanded him to return to the castle the following day.

Lord William answered in a sullen tone, that since he had been at the trouble of attending him, he would continue where he was.

This reply encreased the rage of Walter beyond all bounds. He cursed the day that had given birth to so disobedient a son, and again commanded him on his peril to observe the order he had given.

His words and looks terrified Lord William into submission, but he muttered some words of revenge against Alan, which the usurper overheard, and secretly rejoiced at. We have already said, that though he dreaded to attempt the life of his nephew, he ceased not to wish his death. The idea therefore, that this object of his hate might be destroyed by any other efforts than his own, filled him with a base joy, and he vainly flattered him-

himſelf, that by not participating the action, he might eſcape the puniſhment. Actuated by theſe thoughts, he neither encouraged Lord William to the perpetration of his threats, or forbade him the execution. Next morn Lord William quitted Wincheſter, and Edward prepared to aſſert his father's rights.

Numbers daily flocked to his ſtandard. Thoſe barons who ſtill maintained their loyalty unblemiſhed, joined him with their dependants, and to compleat the good fortune of the royal party, Henry eſcaped from his pretended friends to Wincheſter.

The governing barons now found they had vigorous meaſures to expect, and determined to oppoſe them with the ſame. A body of forces was detached to ſurprize Wincheſter, but the vigilance of Edward diſappointed them. They were repulſed with loſs and diſgrace.

Alan ſignalized his valour in this firſt encounter. Led on by the impetuoſity of youth,

youth, and the thirst of glory, he pierced through the rebel ranks, and seizing their standard, bore it off in spite of opposition. The enemy, struck by the fire of his eyes, and the gallantry of his deportment, made way for him involuntarily. But their commander, Adam Gordon, loudly upbraiding their pusillanimity, advanced fiercely towards him, and a furious combat ensued.

Edward, hearing the danger of his young friend, hastened to his relief. The battle now raged more fiercely than ever, but the royal party quickly obliged the rebels to seek safety in flight.

Alan, who still grasped the standard, now threw it at the Prince's feet. "Thus," cried he exultingly, "may all the adversaries of my Prince be humbled."

"Brave youth!" cried Edward, embracing him, "from this moment I take charge of thy fortunes, thou art the brother of my soul."

"May

"May I," cried Alan, bending one knee, "deserve the appellation!"

"Thou must—thou wilt!" returned Edward, raising him, "but come—my Eleanora shall learn the exploits of her champion." In saying these words, he bade Alan mount his horse, and obliged him to ride beside him into the town.

Walter, who had continued within the walls, beheld their approach, and perceived they held familiar converse.—That sight afflicted him with a thousand pangs; he had indulged a hope that his nephew would have fallen a victim to the rashness of his courage; and the certainty of his safety, joined to the evident favour of the Prince, finished the measure of his anguish; however a skilled adept in hypocrisy, he concealed his agonies, and affected to partake in the general satisfaction.

A parliament was now called, and the King resumed his former authority, the barons

barons submitted to what they dared not oppose, and the people looked forward to an end of their calamities.

Leicester, mean time, not discouraged by the bad success of his enterprise, resolved upon entirely annihilating that power he had already humbled. Llewellin, the hereditary and allured foe of the English, professed himself as a proper ally. He entered into a confederacy with this Prince, and engaged him to invade England with a body of thirty thousand Welch.

Their treaty was yet a secret, and the court gave itself up to rejoicing and festivity. One day, during this time, a young peasant desired to speak in private with the son of Fitz-Osborne.

It was Gerald—the innocent cause of his quarrel with Lord William, and of the usurper's machinations.

The youth prostrated himself at Alan's feet, "my noble master," cried he, "the

"the poor Gerald bleſſes heaven for giving him now the power of requiting thy generoſity." In ſaying this, he preſented him with a paper: it was from Alice, and contained theſe words:

"My ſon, there are ſnares ſet for thee—the Almighty has yet preſerved thy precious life, may he continue his protection! Gerald will tell thee all."

Alan, with a countenance where perplexity, not fear, bore ſway, raiſed the kneeling youth, and bade him diſcloſe the myſtery.

Gerald informed him, that in returning from the foreſt a few days before, at the cloſe of evening, with a burden of wood, he had heard the name of Alan pronounced in a reſentful tone by a voice which he diſtinguiſhed to be that of Lord William. Struck by the ſound, he ſtopped, and concealing himſelf behind ſome thick underwood, ſhortly perceived he had not been miſtaken. Lord William advanced

accom-

accompanied by the domeſtic who attended his perſon. From the former he heard theſe words: "Bertram," ſaid he, "diſſuade not but obey me—ſhall a baſe born ſtripling raviſh thoſe honours, and thoſe favours which are my right?—No, the minion of Edward ſhall rue his preſumption in his blood!" "But the Earl," interrupted his companion. "Fear not his reſentment," anſwered Lord William, "though I know not from what motive he careſſes Alan, yet I can ſee his kindneſs is conſtrained. Was not his reſentment againſt me occaſioned by ſuffering this minion to bear me company to court? Nay more, my threats were conceived in terms too plain to leave him in ignorance of my intention, yet he diſſuaded me not."

This aſſurance ſeemed to ſatisfy Bertram. He aſſented to what his Lord deſired, and both then proceeded farther into the foreſt to concert, as they ſaid, proper

proper means for the execution. Gerald fearing discovery if he followed, stole from his hiding place, and carried home his burden. Next morn he communicated to Alice what he had overheard, and she trembling with apprehension, dispatched him immediately to Winchester.

This was the sum of Gerald's intelligence. Alan betrayed no symptom of dread at the information, but thanked the youth, and promised to reward his zeal. "Talk not of reward, my noble master," returneth he, "I ask no other, than devoting my life to thy service. Gerald will quit thee no more, if thou dost not spurn him from thee." "Spurn thee, faithful creature!" cried Alan with glistening eyes, "base indeed were my heart, if I could spurn thee!—No, generous youth, we will never part—thou shalt share the destiny of a master, who is himself dependant."

Gerald kissed his hand with a look of acknowledgement, and tears of pleasure streamed

streamed down his cheeks. From that moment they were inseparable, and he ceased not to watch the steps of Alan with unremitting care.

The security of the court was soon disturbed, by the intelligence of Llewellin's invasion, and of Montfort's joining him with a body of forces.

Before the prince could take proper measures to oppose them, a great part of the kingdom suffered from their licentious devastations. But Edward did not long continue idle. The rangers were defeated in some skirmishes, and victorious in others.

The son of Fitz-Osborne maintained the reputation he had acquired in his first encounter, by successive acts of valour, and the prudence and wisdom of his conduct, equally evinced, induced Edward to intrust him with the charge of an enterprize, which seemed calculated for riper years.

This

This was to attack a fortreſs, which was ſuſpected to contain the wife and daughter of Leiceſter.

His ſucceſs juſtified the Prince's choice. After an aſſault which was bravely oppoſed, he drew out the defenders of the caſtle by a pretended flight: then turning precipitately, the purſuers became the purſued, and his party entered the gates promiſcouſly with the enemy.

The cries of the vanquiſhed, filled the Counteſs of Leiceſter with the moſt terrible apprehenſions; but the ſight of the victor, his extreme youth, and noble air, changed her fear into admiration! "We are your priſoners," ſaid ſhe, falling at his feet with her daughter, "but we truſt in your clemency."—Gertrude Montfort caſt a timid glance at the young hero, but ſpoke not.

Alan, haſtening to take them from that poſture of humiliation, aſſured them of honourable treatment. His accents ſunk into

into the ſoul of Gertrude; ſhe caſt another glance towards him, and bleſſed her captivity.

Alan felt only the emotions of humanity and benevolence. He reiterated his promiſe of protection, gave orders for their being ſerved, and attended as before, and placing a garriſon of his own ſoldiers in the fortreſs, returned to Winchester with his meaner priſoners.

Five days had ſerved for his expedition. Edward ſcarcely convinced of his good fortune by the ſight of the captives, could not repreſs his aſtoniſhment or his pleaſure. The modeſty of Alan's deportment heightened his admiration; he led him triumphantly to his conſort, and Walter experienced new torments.

But Alan's gallant treatment of the Counteſs, inſpired him with a ſudden hope of turning it to his diſadvantage. Impelled by this idea, he went into the apartment of the King, whoſe old prejudices

judices in his favour had returned. Accustomed to lavish his affections on the unworthy, he even held him in stricter confidence than before.

Walter related to him his nephew's success, with apparent pleasure, and hidden malice.

He extolled his bravery, but condemned his imprudence, in permitting the Countess to continue in a place from whence Leicester could deliver her with ease.

Henry, struck by the hint, sent for the Prince. Edward entered, full of Alan's praises. The King demanded whether the Countess of Leicester, and her daughter, had been brought to Winchester. Edward gave a negative reply.

"Then—" cried the King, "Montfort will deliver his wife, and we shall lose the fruits of this boasted success."

"No my Lord," returned the Prince, "our young victor has for the present provided

provided against that event, and I will take care of the future."

Henry, eaſily ſwayed to oppoſite opinions, took that of his Son, till he retired from his preſence. Walter then renewed his inſinuations; he repreſented, that even ſuppoſing the Prince's confidence to be founded in juſtice, the Counteſs's captivity would not give Leiceſter any pain, nor incline him to any accommodation, while he was ſenſible ſhe was treated with honour, and unſubjected to inſult.

This conſideration weighed with the fickle Henry. He again required the Prince's attendance, and informed him of his determination to have his noble captive brought to Wincheſter and committed to the gloom of a dungeon.

The generous ſoul of Edward ſtarted with abhorrence; "can my father and my King," cried he, "commit an action, which would diſgrace his dignity and violate the rights of humanity?"

Henry

Henry, more open to ſuſpicion and to fear than to gallantry or generoſity, heard his ſon with an unmoved aſpect, and repeated his orders.

The Prince, mindful of duty though filled with ſhame, bent his head in token of obedience, and ſought Alan, to whom he told what had paſſed.

"O heaven!" cried the youth, "will my Prince, will my Edward ſuffer ſuch a breach of the laws of honour and of virtue?"

"Thy ſovereign and mine commands it," returned the Prince "we will obey him in carrying the Counteſs to Wincheſter, but we will treat her with obſervance and reſpect."

That promiſe pacified Alan in ſome meaſure, but he could not think of the Counteſs's ſuſpecting him of falſhood without the ſincereſt grief.

Walter, who had hoped to effect Alan's ruin by promoting a quarrel between

tween Henry and his ſon, was mortified at that Prince's ſubmiſſion. He attempted again to fan the flame of contention, but without ſucceſs, Edward's filial duty counteracting all his inſinuations.

Montfort's wife and daughter were brought to Wincheſter and committed to cloſe durance. At the inſtance of Walter, (notwithſtanding Edward's promiſe and Alan's ſolicitude) they were treated with every degree of contumely and inſult which the wantonneſs of power and barbarity could inflict.

Edward now concealed not his indignation, nor Alan his grief, but both were uſeleſs in ſoftening the captivity of theſe unhappy perſons.

Some evenings after this event, Alan walked without the walls of Wincheſter, accompanied by Gerald, to whom he imparted his ſorrow and his confuſion, at the impriſonment of Montfort's family.

While they were ſo employed, the ſound of haſty footſteps made them turn

their heads, and they perceived four men armed with battle-axes, approaching them.

Alan at firſt imagined they might be ſome ſoldiers from the town, and meant to let them paſs; but Gerald perceiving Bertram, the confidant of Lord William, exclaimed in a loud voice, "treachery! baſe treachery!" and put himſelf in a poſture of defence by the ſide of his maſter.

Alan now drew his ſword, and waited the aſſailants with a reſolute air.

Bertram, advancing, lifted up his heavy battle-ax with an intention of cleaving Alan to the middle, but a well directed ſtroke from Gerald laid the hand and the weapon harmleſs on the earth.

The maimed Bertram ſunk down with the anguiſh of his wound, and Alan quickly ſeizing his adverſary's ax, and aiming a furious blow at one of the three (who now aſſaulted him together) laid him ſenſeleſs at his feet.

The

The two remaining ruffians ſtaggered back aſtoniſhed; Alan perceived their confuſion and redoubled his ſtrokes. Gerald, animated by the danger of his maſter, exerted himſelf valiantly, and the aſſailants were obliged to give way.

At the ſame inſtant both threw down their weapons and betook themſelves to flight with the rapidity of a roe who hears the cries of the hunters.

Alan and his companion purſued them, but without effect. They then returned and found Bertram reſtored to ſenſe, and writhing in agony. The blood which had ceaſed to flow during his ſwoon, now ſtreamed ſo faſt that they apprehended his ſpeedy diſſolution.

Alan, ſtruck with compaſſion, tore off ſome of his garments and bound up the wound. Gerald, tender-hearted on other occaſions, was now obdurate. "Suffer the miſcreant to die," cried he in an angry tone, "he would have deſtroyed

thee; why ſhouldeſt thou ſeek to preſerve him?"

"True," ſaid Bertram in a weak voice, "I would have deſtroyed him, but I am only the inſtrument of another's guilt. If life is ſpared me," continued he, turning to Alan, "I will unfold to thine ear an inſquitous plot, and though the diſcloſure cannot exculpate me, it may ſerve to guard thee againſt future attempts." At theſe words he fell into another ſwoon.

Gerald, now intereſted in his recovery, aſſiſted Alan in reſtoring him to life; they ſucceeded, and ſupported him into the town.

Edward met them while they were thus employed. Filled with anxiety for his young aſſociate, whoſe garments were ſpotted with blood, and his hair diſhevelled, he demanded what had happened.

Alan, from a principle of generoſity, would have declined accuſing his kinſman;

man; but Gerald, who was ſwayed by no ſuch motives, inſtantly related the declaration of the wounded Bertram, and called upon him to execute his promiſe. The Prince ſeconded this command.

The trembling culprit, weighed down with all the horrors of guilt, and the oppreſſions of pain, implored him to reſpite the relation till the enſuing morn, when he would prepare to obey him. Alan added his entreaties for the ſame purpoſe; and much againſt the will of Gerald the Prince complied.

Bertram was now borne to an apartment in the Palace, which he had no ſooner entered, than another fainting fit ſeized him, and he breathed no more.

This event inſpired Gerald with anger and vexation; he poured ſtrong cordials down the throat of the lifeleſs Bertram, ſhook his corſe with violence, and called repeatedly on his name. Alan reminding him of the impotence of theſe attempts,

turned from the ſcene with a mixture of pity and horror.

An account of his domeſtic's treachery reached Walter, at the ſame moment with that of his deceaſe. More diſappointed by the fruſtration of the one, than afflicted at the other, he even regarded this laſt event as an inſtance of good fortune. Bertram might have diſcloſed ſome dangerous ſecrets, which he flattered himſelf were for ever hidden by his demiſe.

In this confidence he ſought his nephew, and found him in the apartment of Eleanora, engaged in an earneſt diſcourſe with her and the Prince.

Walter, counterfeiting the moſt violent emotions of joy, ran towards Alan, and falling on his neck, uttered a thouſand incoherent congratulations. The Prince, deceived by his diſſimulation, gave him credit for a virtue to which he was a ſtranger; but Alan, recollecting the words

of

of Alice, and the diſcloſure of Gerald, received his ſelicitations with an air of coldneſs and diſtruſt.

Too intent on giving the appearance of kindneſs to the ſenſations of malice and regret, Walter heeded not the countenance of his nephew; but ſecretly applauded his own art.

The attention of Edward was ſoon called off to a matter that more nearly concerned him. A courier arrived from London with letters from the Queen, his mother.

Theſe informed him, that Fitz-Richard, the mayor of London, favoured the party of Leiceſter, and had already taken ſome ſteps to promote his intereſt. The Queen added, that ſhe was in hourly apprehenſion from the inſults of a rude and licentious rabble, who loudly reproached her as one of the firſt movers of the King's bad adminiſtration, and ſhe implored her ſon to haſten to her relief.

Edward immediately carried theſe letters to the King, and repreſenting that the partizans of Leiceſter would certainly revenge the treatment of his Counteſs on the defenceleſs Queen, beſought him to mitigate the ſeverity of her impriſonment. Henry yielded to his perſuaſion, and the Prince haſtened to impart the news to the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne, who, filled with joy, would himſelf bear it to the Counteſs.

The ſignet of Henry obtained him admittance to the dungeon. But what ſhame and indignation ſeized his generous ſoul, on beholding the ſituation of that unfortunate lady. From the bare and gloomy walls of the priſon, emitted a damp and noxious vapour, and the ſcanty light of a grated caſement added new horrors to the ſcene.

The Counteſs, pale and and emaciated, ſupported her weeping daughter, reclined on a bundle of ſtraw, at once her

her couch and her carpet. At the creaking of the rusty hinges, Gertrude raised her streaming eyes.

"O Heaven!" cried she, grasping her mother's hand, "it is Alan—it is our conqueror!"

The Countess turned her head, and beheld the son of Fitz-Osborne standing in an attitude of woe. "Is not the vengeance of Henry yet gratified!" cried she, in a feeble voice, "does he send thee to inflict new cruelties!"

At these words Alan sprung forward, and casting himself at her feet, sobbed audibly. "My mother, his soul is gentle," cried Gertrude, "he mourns our injuries."

"O God!" exclaimed Alan, "would I could expiate them with my heart's best blood!" "Noble and respected lady," continued he, embracing the Countess's knees, "didst thou see my emotions—wert thou sensible of my confusion at this

fight, thou wouldſt extend to me ſome part of that pity, which is due to thy own ſufferings—but I come to lead thee from this habitation of deſpair—the King commands thy releaſe!"

"What!" interrupted the Counteſs, with an incredulous air, "can the tyrant relent?—Can he have changed barbarity, for compaſſion?"

"It is even ſo," replied Alan, "behold the ſignet of Henry." "Pardon me, youth," ſaid the Counteſs, "if I heſitate in believing thee. He who has loaded the family of Leiceſter with ſuch accumulated indignities—who has burſt the ties of nature, and of blood—cannot now feel the ſoft meltings of humanity in their favour."

"My mother," interrupted Gertrude, with vivacity, "Henry may be deceitful, but Alan wears not the ſemblance of fraud."

"Thanks, generous maid," ſaid the youth, "if Alan wore that ſemblance, it would

would indeed contradict the tenor of his ſentiments."

"I believe thee," ſaid the Counteſs, "and though my ſoul revolts at the idea of obligation to Plantagenet, I will quit this dreary abode with thy guidance, if my feeble limbs allow me."

So ſaying, ſhe gave her hand to Alan, who raiſed her gently, and Gertrude ſupporting her at the other ſide, they paſſed out of the priſon.

Alan conducted his companion to an apartment of the palace, which had been prepared for their reception; and there leaving them to the miniſtration of Eleanora's women, went in ſearch of the Prince.

Edward ſhared in the ſatisfaction of his young friend, and applauded his feelings. The tender Eleanora wept at the recital of the Counteſs's ſufferings, and haſtened to procure her every alleviation which kindneſs would beſtow.

Mean

Mean time that lady was engaged in conſoling her daughter, whoſe tears now ſtreamed with more violence, than while immured in the dungeon. "Be pacified, my child," cried the wife of Montfort, "thy noble parent will deliver us from the tyrant's power; his coward ſoul trembles at the name of Leiceſter. Ceaſe thy lamentations, we ſhall ſoon be free."

"Alas!" cried Gertrude, "that freedom"—ſhe pauſed, breathed a deep ſigh, and hid her bluſhing face in the boſom of her mother.

"Relinquiſh thy doubts," ſaid the Counteſs, kiſſing her cheeks, "thou ſhalt behold the ſtandard of Montfort diſplayed on the walls of Wincheſter—thou ſhalt ſee my abject, my unnatural, my cruel brother, humbled at the feet of Leiceſter!"

"O my mother," ſaid Gertrude, ſuddenly raiſing her eyes, "is not Alan in the party of Henry?"

The

The Countefs ſtarted, and Gertrude ſunk down confuſed and fearful.

The former was going to ſpeak, when Henry entered the chamber. At that ſight, the wife of Montfort forgot her daughter's words in indignation againſt her brother. Reſentment gave her ſtrength; ſhe aroſe, and making a repulſive motion with her hand, caſt a glance of ſcorn at the King.

"Comeſt thou," cried ſhe, "to witneſs thy work?—comeſt thou to receive the acknowledgements of a ſiſter? Take them, baſe tyrant—but take them as thou deſerveſt, in bitter execrations. May the inſults, which thou haſt offered to the wife and daughter of Montfort, return to thee an hundred fold!—May thy life become as unfortunate as thy perſon is deſpicable—and to crown thy anguiſh and thy torment, mayeſt thou be reduced to crouch beneath the feet of him thou hateſt moſt—even Leiceſter!"

The

The King turned pale at this address, and Edward, who then entered, overhearing it, besought him to leave the Countess to herself. Henry complied, uttering threats of impotent indignation against Leicester, as he retired.

The Countess could not behold with complacency the son of him she detested. To the offers and soothings of Edward, she answered only, by averted eyes, and a frowning aspect. Gertrude regarded her royal kinsman with more gentle looks, and a more forgiving heart; but she too preserved a strict silence, fearful of irritating her mother.

The Prince, finding all his persuasions ineffectual to allay the anger of the Countess, followed the example of Henry and quitted the chamber; first giving orders to the attendant women, not to remit their respect and observance of that lady's commands.

Leicester, who had learned the captivity of his family, and their subsequent ill-

ill treatment, had now the motive of revenge added to that of ambition.

Succeſs ſeemed to authorize both. Many populous towns, ſwayed by his faction, opened their gates to his army; and the citizens of London, breaking into an avowed revolt, after offering many inſults to the Queen, pillaged and deſtroyed the habitations of thoſe who ſtill adhered to Henry.

The brave Edward ſtrained every effort to ſuſtain the cauſe of his father, while he, ever weak and puſillanimous, contented himſelf with deploring the turbulence of the times, and making vain applications to the Pope for his protection.

The Counteſs of Leiceſter, ſtill a priſoner, though honourably treated, ceaſed not to exult at this poſture of affairs. Alan was the only perſon within the walls of Wincheſter whom ſhe ſaw with pleaſure, or ſpoke to with complacency.

Every

Every hour therefore, which he could ſpare from the ſervice of the Prince, was ſpent in her ſociety.

The ſoul of Gertrude bounded with joy at his approach, and ſunk with his departure. If he ſpoke, ſhe caught his accents with an eager ear, if he touched her hand, a ſoft thrill ran through her blood, her frame trembled, and her boſom heaved.

Alan, unmoved himſelf, beheld not her emotions. But the Counteſs ſoon perceived her daughter's ſituation, and remonſtrated with her. The innocence of Gertrude was no match for the ſolicitations of her mother: ſhe declared the ſecret of her ſoul.

"What!" cried the wife of Montfort, with an haughty air, "Is a partizan of Henry beloved by the daughter of Leiceſter?—Art thou indeed ſo very mean of heart?"

The gentle Gertrude, petrified by the looks and words of her mother, ſunk in a ſwoon

a ſwoon at her feet. The Counteſs now repented her haſtineſs; ſhe threw herſelf beſide Gertrude, called her by every endearing appellation, and ſhed a flood of tears.

In a ſhort time Gertrude recovered her ſenſes. She beheld the attitude of her mother, and preſſing her hands, gave her a look full of acknowledgment.—That look ſerved to baniſh all the anger of the Counteſs. "My child," cried ſhe, taking her to her boſom—"my child, canſt thou forgive me?—But I will make thee large amends for the pangs I have inflicted on thy gentle heart. Alan ſhall be thine—he ſhall deſert his allegiance to Henry—thou wilt be the price."

"O, my mother," cried Gertrude, with tears of joyful tranſport,—"how ſweet are thy words—how delightful thy aſſurances! Shall Alan be mine?—ſhall the noble, the generous, the heroic Alan, be mine for ever?"

Yet,

"Yet alas!" added ſhe, in a melancholy tone, and caſting down her eyes—"Alas! dear mother, he may deſpiſe the fond Gertrude—he may reject her vows."

"No," interrupted the Counteſs;—"the daughter of Montfort cannot be deſpiſed—ſhe cannot be rejected! Baniſh thy fears, my child, and think only of the happineſs that awaits thee."

"But my father," ſaid Gertrude, faltering.

"Ambition, not avarice," returned the Counteſs, "ſways the ſoul of Leiceſter. The parents of Alan were noble, though an unhappy fatality has deprived him of their rights. The fame of the gallant Fitz-Oſborne lives afreſh in his ſon, and the conquering arm of Leiceſter may reſtore to him the poſſeſſions of his family."

"Propitious be the words of my mother," ſaid Gertrude, kiſſing her hand.

The

The Countess preſſed her to her boſom, and promiſed to ſound Alan on the ſubject of this diſcourſe, at their next interview.

But they beheld him not again for many days. The Prince, eager to relieve the Queen from the inſults ſhe hourly underwent, and ſenſible that all the avenues to London were guarded by Leiceſter's army, diſpatched Alan with a body of horſe to reconnoitre their motions. In executing this ſervice he was diſcovered by a party of the enemy, and immediately ſurrounded.

The ſon of Fitz-Oſborne encouraged his men to meet the aſſault with vigour. The ſucceſs was equal for ſome time, but freſh troops coming up under the command of young Montfort, ſon to Leiceſter, Alan was obliged to yield, after half his brave adherents lay gaſping on the earth. He delivered his ſword with an indignant air to the victor, who cauſ-

ing

ing him and his remaining ſoldiers to be bound, returned with his priſoners to the camp of Leiceſter.

As that noble was then abſent, the captives were committed to ſtrict confinement, 'till his pleaſure ſhould be known.

Alan, ſtruck with confuſion at this ignominious reverſe, looked at his bonds, and frowned. "Now," cried he, with emotion—"now ſhall Eleanora ceaſe to applaud her champion—now ſhall Edward regret his imprudent confidence!"—— "O Heaven!" continued he, throwing himſelf on the ground, "why died I not like Fitz-Oſborne, in the field!"

Gerald, the companion of his impriſonment, ſought to conſole him.

"No, my noble maſter," cried he, "neither Edward or Eleanora ſhall regret their confidence in thee. Overwhelmed by numbers, but not depreſſed in courage, thou didſt not yield 'till all methods of reſiſtance were no more."

"Thee

"Thee too, Gerald," interrupted Alan, —"thee too, have I entangled in my ruin!"

"Speak not of ruin," cried the faithful youth; "Gerald would partake captivity, indignities, and poverty with thee, rather than a downy bed and lordly fare with another."

These words, so full of fidelity, affected Alan. He would have embraced him, but his arms were bound. "Shameful bonds," said he, indignantly, "ye are fit ornaments for the son of Fitz-Osborne!" "O, Alice!" said he again, in a tender accent, "dear and beloved Alice! who shall give thee comfort?—who shall mitigate thy woe?——But reserve thy tears, my mother—reserve them for one more worthy—not for a captive and a slave. Alan has disgraced thy lessons—they taught not cowardly submission, but brave resistance! Lord William too—yes, he will point the finger of

scorn

ſcorn—he will ſay, obſerve the brave favourite of Edward—ſee the effects of his valour—bonds and ignominy!"

His exclamations were interrupted by the entrance of young Montfort.

"I come to make thee my acknowledgements," ſaid he, in an inſulting tone; "I find that to thee I am indebted for the loſs of a mother and a ſiſter. Heroic youth! thou haſt manifeſted thy proweſs well—thou haſt conquered women!"

"I wage not a war of words," anſwered the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne, in a ſcornful accent.

"No—deeds ſpeak thy valour," continued Montfort; "witneſs thy preſent ſtate."

Alan beheld him with a look of indignation and contempt. "If I am again free"—ſaid he—"if I again meet thee in the field." He pauſed and caſt a glance at his chains—"Vain threats," added he, "while I wear theſe."

"True,"

"True," returned Montfort, "thy anger is indeed impotent—thou art the captive of Leiceſter, and aſſure thyſelf he will revenge upon thy head the injuries his wife and daughter have undergone from thy tyrannical and cowardly maſter."

"Let him uſe his pleaſure," ſaid Alan, calmly; and Montfort paſſed out.

The terrified Gerald approached his maſter, and ſinking at his feet deplored his misfortune. "Where is thy fortitude?" ſaid the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne.—"But now thou madeſt light of our captivity—what means this ſudden change?"

"Alan!"—replied Gerald, "I then ſought to reconcile thee to thyſelf; I feared for thee no other enemy; but now what dangers haſt thou not to dread—what inſults to apprehend—I tremble—O Heaven!—I tremble, even for thy life."

"My good Gerald," replied Alan, "the ungenerous menaces of Montfort, give

give me no other sensation than disdain. His conduct has inspired me with a value for myself, which I possessed not before. —Yes Gerald—I glory in my defeat—I regard it as more honourable than his conquest; since he is capable of using it unworthily."

"But my master—thy life—thy precious life," interrupted Gerald. "Can I lose it more nobly than in the service of my Prince, and of my King?" asked Alan.

—The question did not satisfy Gerald: he hung his head, but made no reply. The son of Fitz-Osborne endeavoured to inspire his domestic's drooping soul with fortitude, but in vain. Gerald could smile at his own danger, but that of his master filled him with affright.

—Thus passed on the time, till the fourth day of their imprisonment, when the Earl of Leicester arrived at the camp. His son, acquainted him with the prize he

he had taken, and Alan was conducted to his presence.

Moved by his fearless and gallant air, he continued gazing at him for some moments in silent admiration. "Is this," cried he at length—"Is this Alan Fitz-Osborne?—Is this beardless youth the hero who mowed down our bandmen, who assaulted our fortresses—who struck terror into the hearts of our adherents!"

"He is now thy captive," said Alan, in a modest tone.

"Would he were my friend!" exclaimed the Earl—"Brave young man, he, who is most injured by thy valour, applauds and honours its exertions. Thou hast robbed me of my family; but I think thou wert not accessary to their evil treatment."

Alan bowed his head in silence.

"No—" resumed the Earl in a voice of resentment. "Henry wanted no ins-

ſtigators to cruelty—unhappy Iſabella!—the title of ſiſter availed thee little, when contraſted with the crime of being wife to Montfort!—My mild Gertrude too;—the tyrant's barbarity ſpared not even her!—but partners of my ſoul, I will avenge you—I will avenge your wrongs, your indignities, perhaps—O! direful thought!—perhaps your deaths!"

"Compoſe thy apprehenſions," ſaid Alan, "the Counteſs and thy daughter are delivered from the dungeon's gloom—they are now in the court of Henry, and attended as their rank demands."

"May I believe thee?" ſaid the Earl, eagerly.

"I am not accuſtomed to ſpeak the words of falſehood," anſwered Alan, coldly.

"My father," interrupted young Montfort, "wilt thou truſt the declaration of an enemy; ſeeſt thou not that his own intereſt is concerned in thy belief;"

lief;" "peace," ſaid the Earl, "the aſpect of this youth, bears the characters of truth and candour—I accept their teſtimony."

Alan again bent his head.

"But," continued Leiceſter, "though I give credence to his intelligence, my reſentment is not abated againſt Henry—Ever mean and abject, the ſoul of the tyrant feels not the movements of compaſſion, but thoſe of fear—and he ſhall have cauſe to fear—he ſhall have cauſe to tremble—the ſceptre ſhall be torn from that weak and vicious hand, which has only wielded it for the purpoſe of oppreſſion. It ſhall fill one more worthy."

He paused, and Alan averted his eyes.

"My words ſeem to diſpleaſe thee, young man," ſaid Leiceſter.

"I approve not the accents of diſloyalty," anſwered he, with a bold and fearleſs air.

"Ha! beware youth, beware thee," exclaimed Montfort, "I am not ſo void of anger as thou ſeemeſt to think."

"I ſhould merit my own ſcorn," ſaid Alan, "if I were ſwayed by a fear of thy anger to diſavow the ſentiments of my heart."

"And does thy heart lead thee to attach thyſelf to vice, to ſickleneſs, to Henry?" demanded Leiceſter.

"I reſpect the foibles of my ſovereign," anſwered Alan, "and I love the virtues of his ſon." Leiceſter bit his lips and continued ſilent.

Young Montfort beheld the agitation of the Earl with a ſecret joy. He envied the ſpirit and the fame of Alan, and felt all the pleaſure of a little mind in the hope of depreſſing the one, and clouding the other.

But the ſoul of Leiceſter, though ambitious of power, was not dead to the ſenſations of virtue. He felt the reproof of Alan, but he could not help applaud-

ing

ing the motive which occaſioned it; and at length breaking ſilence, "I would rather chooſe thee for my friend than my enemy," (ſaid he to the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne) "I condemn not thy gratitude to Edward, who I learn has diſtinguiſhed thee with a large portion of his favour; but, by a ſimilar tie, I would attach thee to myſelf. Quit a party, which grows every day more weak and more deſpiſed—follow the general voice of an united nation—embrace my intereſts, and be to me as a ſon. Honours and wealth, are, or will be ſoon, ſolely in my power to diſpenſe. By adhering to my fortunes, thou wilt deſerve, and ſhalt receive a more than common ſhare."

Alan anſwered not, but bent his eyes to the ground with an air of confuſion.

"Deliberate," continued the Earl, "deliberate on my propoſal; thou wilt ſoon perceive the advantages which will accrue from thy acceptance."

"It requires not deliberation," ſaid Alan, in a tone of vivacity; "if thou didſt perceive my irreſolution, impute it only to the ſhame that filled my breaſt, at being ſuſpected capable of ſo baſe a change. Doſt thou promiſe me honours? No—the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne ſpurns at the honours which are to be purchaſed by diſloyalty, and the wealth that is to be acquired by treaſon! Thou biddeſt me follow the general voice of an united nation. But what is this nation? All the truly noble, the generous, and the brave, cleave to the intereſts of their king and of their country; intereſts which, notwithſtanding the arguments of ſophiſtry, cannot be divided without the deſtruction of both. For the noiſy and proſtituted herd who find no happineſs but in tumult, and no pleaſure but in change, who, allured by the call of faction and the love of licentiouſneſs, this moment careſs and adulate the leader, whom the

next

next they calumniate and reproach. Alan would indeed ſcorn to embrace their ſentiments, or to imitate their conduct."

This ſpirited reply ſtung Leiceſter to the quick. He aroſe from his ſeat, and meaſured ſome haſty paces acroſs the tent; then turning abruptly—"I know not, young man," cried he, haughtily, "whether the inſolence of thy diſcourſe ſprings from a contempt of my power, or a confidence in my clemency!"

"I am unactuated by either," ſaid Alan.

"It may be ſo," reſumed the Earl; "but if thou really didſt feel the latter, it ſhall for once be juſt. Take heed however, bold youth, how thou offendeſt me again—Leiceſter does not uſe to brook inſulting language patiently."

In ſaying thus, he remanded Alan into cuſtody, and young Montfort led him off. Gerald, who had been in agonies during his maſter's abſence, could not

contain his joy at ſeeing him return ſafe. This was encreaſed by a ſoldier's entering, in purſuance of an order from the Earl, to deliver both from their bonds.

The moment Gerald was at liberty, he flew to Alan's feet, and claſped his knees with rapture. The ſon of Fitz-Oſborne could not behold that action without emotion. He raiſed the faithful Gerald, and forgetful of the diſtinctions of ſervant or of maſter, ſtrained him to his grateful breaſt.

While theſe things paſſed in the camp of Montfort, Edward, ignorant of his young knight's fate, and dreading that ſome terrible misfortune had befallen him, could not controul his anxiety or his uneaſineſs.

Walter affected to experience equal pain; and the more his heart exulted in ſecret, the more he pretended to deplore and to bewail a loſs which he flattered himſelf was certain.

The

The Countess of Leicester really felt that sorrow, of which he affected only the appearance. But who can speak the pangs of the loveforn Gertrude. Sunk on the bosom of her mother, she wept without intermission, nor could all the efforts of that lady succeed in alleviating her grief.

"O, my mother!"—would she cry—"Speak not of comfort, speak of anguish, of affliction, of despair, and I will heed thy words. Was he not most lovely? Did he not unite the bravery of a hero, with the meekness of infancy? Was he not generous, gallant, just?—And he is gone—and thou wouldst have my tears cease to flow.——He is gone—and thou talkest to me of comfort!——O my mother—he is gone for ever, and he knew not the heart of Gertrude!—he died ignorant of her love, and thy goodness!"

This idea seemed to give the daughter of Montfort new grief. She would beat

her beauteous boſom, ſhe would rend her jetty treſſes, ſhe would renew her exclamations.

The Counteſs, from whom her own ſufferings had not extorted a tear, gave many to the ſorrow of her daughter. Her days paſſed in heavineſs and mourning; a prey to maternal fears. She no longer regarded Henry with reſentment, or her captivity with regret.

Things wore a new face, when a deſerter from Leiceſter's camp arriving at Wincheſter, gave a recital of Alan's encounter, and the reſult of that event.

The Prince, tranſported with a ſincere joy, haſtened to communicate this account to Walter and the King. The former ſtruck with vexation, had his torments increaſed, by the neceſſity of aſſuming an appearance foreign to his ſentiments. He affected to partake the delight of Edward, but the ſtruggle in his mind was too apparent. The expreſſions of

of pleaſure which he attempted to utter, were accompanied by a voice of anguiſh, and the ſounds, half formed, died upon his tongue.

Edward obſerved him with a penetrating and curious eye. Walter interpreting his looks, and recovering his uſual diſſimulation, accounted for his confuſion by another falſhood.

"Let not my Prince (ſaid he) wonder at the ſeeming contradiction between my words and countenance. True, I feel much ſatisfaction in the idea of Alan's ſafety, but that ſatisfaction muſt be imperfect, while he continues a priſoner to Leiceſter.——The hatred that proud noble bears the King, and his well known enmity to Henry's party, give me ſtrong cauſe to fear for my nephew, who has ſo often and ſo bravely diſplayed his loyalty."

This eager apology, where no accuſation was offered, contributed to fix the

Prince

Prince in an opinion, that he meant not as he ſaid. But concealing his ſentiments, he turned to the King, and aſked what was to be done.

Henry, unuſed and incapable of judging for himſelf, looked at Walter; but another glance from the Prince throwing that hypocrite into his former confuſion, he continued ſilent.

Edward then ſpoke—"We have already ſeen," ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf to the King, "that Leiceſter's ſpirit has not been ſubdued by the inſults offered to his family; he is yet unacquainted with the change in their ſituation; let the Counteſs herſelf bear him the intelligence. We war not with women. Let us ſet the wife and daughter of Leiceſter at liberty, and by ſo doing recover an uſeful and valiant aſſociate. We will exchange them for my young knight."

Walter, who ſtill perceived the Prince's eyes fixed upon him, did not dare to thwart

thwart his reſolution. He even affected to be pleaſed with it, but he made himſelf full amends for that conſtraint when alone.

"Why," cried he, with a gloomy frown, "why am I forced to aſſume an appearance of affection for him whom my ſoul deteſts? What avails it that I have wreſted his inheritance?—that I have ſtigmatized his birth? Honour ſurrounds him, affluence awaits him, and my arts recoil upon myſelf. Perhaps he may one day." "No," cried he, interrupting himſelf, "that is impoſſible—oblivion ſhrouds the fate of Fitz-Oſborne and Matilda. What hinders then, that I diſpatch this obſtacle to my peace? He has already twice eſcaped; but he is not invulnerable. Vain ſcruples, fooliſh terrors, be ye baniſhed from the ſoul of Walter. Ha! that ſhriek of woe, whence comes it?"

He

He paused, and gazed wildly, then suddenly resuming his soliloquy——— "'Twas nothing but the coinage of fancy," said he, trembling, "Why should those illusions disturb me—Ha!—again—that dying groan—horror!—the bleeding dagger,"——he sunk senseless on the floor.

Edward, mean while, entered the apartment of the Countess of Leicester.

"I come, madam," said he, "fraught with tidings of joy for you, and my fair kinswoman—freedom awaits you: the King has given orders for your release. We go to exchange you for Alan Fitz-Osborne, who is now detained captive in the camp of Montfort."

"Is Alan alive—and in the camp of my spouse?" exclaimed the Countess. Gertrude sunk half fainting on the bosom of her mother. "He is," replied the Prince.

"Did I not tell thee, my Gertrude," said the Countess, willing to hide the

cause

cauſe of her daughter's agitation, "did I not tell thee we ſhould be free—that we ſhould be delivered from the tyrant's power?—thy pardon, Prince—he is thy father."—"He was once my brother too," added ſhe, "but he has forfeited that name: he is now my foe. And ſoon, very ſoon, ſhall the conquering arm of Leiceſter render him my ſlave!"

A threat ſo injurious to the King and to himſelf inflamed Edward with reſentment. But the reſpect which gallantry exacts to the ſex of the Counteſs, reſtrained him from expreſſing it, and he quitted the apartment without reply.

No ſooner had he departed, than Gertrude claſped her arms around the Counteſs.

"He lives!" cried ſhe, exultingly, "he lives! and Gertrude has not to deplore his loſs!"

This idea occupied her for ſome moments, but a ſudden recollection ſoon changed

changed her transports into sorrow. Her bosom heaved with emotion, and her eyes filled with tears.

"O my mother," cried she, in a tone of dejection, "he lives—but does not live for me. This exchange—bear with thy daughter—this freedom—what is it but misery?—we shall quit Winchester—we shall not see him—he will attach himself more firmly than ever to the cause of Henry!"

"Compose thyself, my child," cried the Countess, "why these forebodings, when happiness begins to dawn upon us? A joyful presage assures me of thy noble sire's success. Thinkest thou that Alan will not desert a fallen party for one victorious? Thinkest thou he will refuse the alliance of the ruler of the state of Leicester?"

"Ah! if interest, not love, induces his compliance," interrupted Gertrude—she paused, and a deep blush overspread her cheek.

"Spare

"Spare thy fears," ſaid the Counteſs, kiſſing her forehead and ſmiling, "both ſhall unite to ſecure the felicity of my child."

Gertrude too attempted to ſmile, but the apprehenſions inſeparable from real affection, mingled a tear with the ſmile.

BOOK

BOOK THE THIRD.

EDWARD now diſpatched a herald to the camp of the enemy, to propoſe the preconcerted exchange. Leiceſter deliberated ſome time whether he ſhould accept it, or return an anſwer of defiance.

At length the feelings of nature conquered thoſe of pride. He aſſented to the demand of Edward, and after ſending away the herald, commanded Alan to be conducted to his tent.

The gallant deportment of the youth, his ſpirit and his candour, had inſenſibly attached to him a large portion of Leiceſter's eſteem. He meant to try one more

more effort to detach him from the party of the King, before he announced his freedom, and with that intention now deſired his preſence.

"Come hither, youth," cried he, as the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne entered, "I have ſomething to impart to thee in confidence."

Alan drew near, and ſeated himſelf on a bench beſide the Earl. Leiceſter then commanded the tent to be cleared, and when his orders were obeyed——

"I am going," ſaid he, "to tell thee ſome inſtances of my good fortune, not with a deſign to inſult thee, but to prove the frailty of thy dependance on Henry and his ſon." Alan ſmiled, but ſpoke not.

"I will own to thee," continued the Earl, "that ſome time ſince I experienced not a few apprehenſions for the ſucceſs of my projects. But the execution is now certain, and I fear no more.

Thou

Thou already knoweſt that the capital, and many other towns, have openly eſpouſed my cauſe. Several prime fortreſſes have alſo been ſubdued ſince thy impriſonment. But this is not all, even in the court of Henry, where I am branded with the name of traitor, where my perſon is ſpoken of with diſtaſte, and my ambition with abhorrence, even in that court I have ſecret friends. Thoſe perſons in whom he places moſt confidence, and whom he regards with moſt affection, thoſe very perſons are my moſt aſſured adherents. I have intelligence of all his motions, all his deſigns, and even of his thoughts. Through this medium I learn, that he is inclined to conclude a peace on any terms, however ſhameful. He thinks with reaſon, that it is better to ſubmit in time to a power which muſt overwhelm him at laſt. The Prince alone reſiſts. Actuated by the ſanguine hopes of youth, he fancies nothing

nothing impoſſible to the valour of his arm, and will not hear of an accommodation. But he will ſoon diſcover his miſtake. The wiſhes of the people are for me. The barons, ſenſible that their own intereſts depend on mine, have unanimouſly declared in my favour. And the clergy, that holy and reſpectable body, at once ſanctify my cauſe, and enſure my ſucceſs."

"And has not Edward any real friends," ſaid Alan, cooly.

From that queſtion, the Earl prognoſticated that his diſcourſe had taken effect.

"Few are the number," replied he, "and ſoon will he diſcover the fallacy of their profeſſions, who pretend to be ſo."

"Yes," cried the ſon of Fitz Oſborne, riſing with an enthuſiaſtic air, "yes!—he has one friend—one powerful friend—one great protector—even the god of armies!

armies! He may chaſten Henry in his anger, but he will ſhield Edward with his love—he will aſſert the rights of his anointed—he will launch the bolts of his vengeance againſt the oppreſſors of injured royalty!"

The eyes of Alan lightened as he ſpoke, his form aſſumed a more than mortal air; he ſeemed to utter the language of inſpiration.

Leiceſter ſhrunk within himſelf; the contraſt was too humiliating. He maintained a deep ſilence for ſome moments. At length confuſion gave place to reſentment. "Go, bold youth," cried he in an haughty tone, "go, utter thy prophetic rhapſodies elſewhere!—Leiceſter diſdains them. Thank the ſacred laws of honour for my forbearance—were not my word already pledged to ſet thee free, thou ſhouldſt haply know that my offers are not to be deſpiſed, nor my perſon inſulted with impunity."

"Yes,"

"Yes," continued he, "thou art free if thou canſt call ſlavery freedom. A few hours will give thee back to the ſervice of that maſter whom thou preferreſt to Montfort—but take heed how I meet thee in the field."

"I will not avoid thee," replied the youth, with a reſolute air.

"'Tis well," returned Montfort—let thy actions anſwer to thy words, and I may think thee an adverſary not unworthy of my ſword."

Alan now quitted the Earl's tent, and rejoined his domeſtic, to whom he communicated what had paſſed. Gerald trembled at one part of his diſcourſe, but his heart bounded with joy at the concluſion.

"My maſter, thou wilt be free!" cried he exultingly, vexation will torment the ſoul of Lord William, and thy beloved Alice ſhall rejoice."

In a ſhort time the ſoldiers of Leiceſter conducted them out of the camp, to a place

place where they found horſes and an eſcort prepared. As Alan vaulted on his ſteed, young Montfort cried with a loud voice and menacing accent, "beware thee of a ſecond captivity!"

Alan turned his head. "Imitate not the clamours of women," ſaid he, contemptuouſly, "a few days may perhaps prove to thee, I anſwer not with words, but deeds."

"Dareſt thou accept my defiance?" ſaid Montfort, flinging down his glove. "I dare, and will!" exclaimed Alan, taking it up, and placing it in the front of his helmet. He ſpurred his horſe, and with his eſcort was ſoon at a conſiderable diſtance from the camp.

The Counteſs and her daughter, attended by Edward and a party from Wincheſter, met them half way.

When the priſoners were exchanged, Alan threw himſelf at the Prince's feet. "Will Edward," ſaid he, "receive the vanquiſhed, and the unworthy?"

"No," anſwered the Prince, obliging him to riſe, "but he will receive his hero, the brave ſon of Fitz-Oſborne.

"My mother," whiſpered Gertrude to the Counteſs, "he ſees us not—he has no eyes but for Edward—my mother, ceaſe to inſpire me with deluſive hopes —he loves not Gertrude!"

At that inſtant, Alan approached, and, bending on one knee, preſſed a hand of each to his lips.

"Reſpected ladies," ſaid he, "we part, perhaps, for ever. If the humble Alan ſhould ſtill preſerve a place in your memories, think of him as one, who would have ſacrificed every thing for your ſervice, ſave his honour and his Prince."

A deep red ſuffuſed the cheeks of Gertrude. She opened her lips, murmured ſome inarticulate words, cloſed them again, and breathed a heavy ſigh.

"Generous youth," ſaid the Counteſs, "we cannot forget thee if we would. Aſſure

Aſſure thyſelf, that Gertrude and Iſabella can never loſe the remembrance of thy virtues, nor ever recall them without eſteem and love."

At theſe words, the Counteſs, led by Edward, placed herſelf in the litter, which was to convey her to the camp of her ſpouſe. Alan took the trembling hand of Gertrude, and ſeated her by her mother. The Counteſs waved her arm thrice as the litter drove off; and the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne, with Edward and his attendants, purſued their way to Winchester.

Here Alan communicated to the Prince what Leiceſter had hinted of the diſaffection of the courtiers. Edward repeated the intelligence to the King, in the preſence of Walter and ſome other nobles, and watched the countenance of his auditors with a ſcrutinizing attention.

His obſervations convinced him that the words of Leiceſter were grounded

in truth. Walter was amongſt the number who incurred his ſuſpicions; the looks of that uſurper betrayed confuſion and anxiety, nor could the veil of diſſimulation, with which he attempted to cover theſe emotions, conceal them from the diſcerning eye of Edward.

He communicated in private to the King the diſcoveries he had made, and the diſcloſure affected Henry differently from what he had expected. Inſtead of guarding againſt the machinations of his courtiers, or puniſhing their diſaffection, he made that a plea to re-urge the neceſſity of coming to an accommodation with Leiceſter.

The Prince interrupted him. "We can make no peace," ſaid he, "but on terms equally diſhonourable to ourſelves, and detrimental to our people. Let us therefore, by continuing a noble reſiſtance, prove ourſelves worthy of good fortune, though we fail to gain it."

The

The puſillanimous Henry accorded not with the ſentiments of his ſon. New ſucceſſes of Leiceſter's determined him ſtill more againſt them; and the advice of Walter contributed to fix his opinion.

The Prince had not been deceived in his ſuſpicions of that treacherous counſellor; he was in truth one of the ſecret friends to whom Montfort alluded, and again played that double part he had acted formerly.

He was actuated to this conduct by the weakneſs of the King, and the power of his enemy; ſenſible that when Leiceſter's views were accompliſhed, thoſe who had moſt reſiſted his deſigns would prove the firſt victims to his reſentment; he flattered himſelf that a contrary conduct would produce contrary effects, while he hoped at the ſame time to preſerve his uſual credit with the King, by his diſſimulation.

Henry now openly prepared to treat of an accommodation, and commiſſions were appointed on both ſides to begin the conference, though without the concurrence of Prince Edward.

The conditions which Leiceſter offered were, that the proviſions of Oxford ſhould be again reſtored, and the barons reinſtated in their former authority; that all the royal caſtles and fortreſſes ſhould be put into their poſſeſſion; that they ſhould name the officers of the King's houſehold and family; that a parliament ſhould be ſummoned to meet at Weſtminſter, in order to concert a plan for their future government. Humiliating as were theſe conditions, Henry aſſented to them all, and Leiceſter loſt no time in improving his ſucceſs.

A parliament was immediately aſſembled, which enacted, that the twenty-four barons ſhould continue to hold the reins of government, not only during the

life of Henry, but alſo during the reign of his ſon.

Far from acquieſcing in this ſhameful agreement, Edward appealed to Lewis of France, to whom he conſented to refer the ſubject of his infringed pretenſions.

Whilſt he waited for the deciſion of that Monarch, Richard, the brother of Henry, arrived from Germany, where he had been lately honoured with the title of King of the Romans; the counſels of this Prince fortified the reſolution of Edward, and again changed the opinion of the irreſolute Henry.

Walter continued to give ſecret advice to Leiceſter of all their intentions, but finding his communications ſlighted by that haughty noble, who imagined that the ſpirit of the royal party was for ever cruſhed, ſhame and mortification overwhelmed him; he found he was contemned by one ſide, and ſuſpected by the other.

In this poſture were affairs, when Alan, entering one morning the apartment of Edward, exclaimed in a joyful tone—"The meſſenger of Lewis awaits the pleaſure of my Prince."——"By thy countenance I gueſs the tenour of his tidings," returned Edward, "let him be admitted."

Alan ruſhed out, and returned with the envoy.

It was Philip de Aumale. The Prince advanced towards him, and ſaluted him with an air of affability.

"Health and good fortune to Edward!" cried De Aumale, bending his knee; "May his enemies periſh before him—may the wiſhes of my pious maſter be anſwered!"

"Then they are for me?" cried Edward, eagerly.

"This ſpeaks the will of my King," returned De Aumale, holding out a paper—"I have orders to open it in the prefence

preſence of England's Monarch, and in thine."

The Prince inſtantly conducted him to Henry, and aſſembling the remaining courtiers, De Aumale read theſe words aloud:

"We have conſidered the complaints "of Edward, and find them conſonant to "juſtice; according to our opinion, his "cauſe is the common one of Princes; we "regard the proceedings of the barons as "equally derogatory to the Majeſty of "the throne, and injurious to the rights "of the people—we call on Edward to "vindicate each, and we promiſe him "our hearty concurrence.

"Signed,

"LEWIS."

"Juſt and pious Monarch!" exclaimed the Prince, "and Edward will anſwer to thy call—he will break the ſhameful

and ignominious bonds that hold his father, and oppreſs his people!"

"May the King of Kings ratify theſe words with the ſeal of ſucceſs," cried Alan, with uplifted eyes; "youth," ſaid De Aumale, preſſing his hand, "thou art loyal—a Frenchman approves loyalty—if thou ever viſiteſt my country, expect to meet in it a friend."

Walter bent his brow involuntarily—"Bane of my peace,"—ſaid he to himſelf—"muſt thy praiſes ever grate mine ear?"

He forgot his hypocriſy for a moment;—"if loyalty" ſaid he aloud in a ſullen tone—"if loyalty attracts the eſteem of De Aumale, the court of Henry preſents many objects to his regard."

He had no ſooner ſpoken theſe words, than he repented of having uttered them.—The Prince obſerved his malice, and deteſted it.—De Aumale frowned diſapprobation; and Alan glanced towards him a look of contemptuous pity.

Senſible

Senſible of his error, he would have gloſſed over the black ſenſations of his heart; but it was too late, he had already withdrawn the veil, and it could not be replaced; ſtung with ſhame at finding his efforts ineffectual, he ſpoke no more, and his ſilence cauſed no regret.

Edward, following the counſels of De Aumale, made the deciſion of the French Monarch public, and ſummoned the military vaſſals of the crown to attend him.

The abſence of Leiceſter, who was then in a different quarter of the kingdom, furthered his deſigns, and they were ſhortly ripe for execution.

He advanced to Northampton, at the head of a ſmall body of troops, which were conſiderably reinforced on the way. That town ſubmitted after a faint reſiſtance; and Leiceſter and Nothingham followed its example.

This

This dawning of ſucceſs filled the Prince with joy, and inſpired his adherents with confidence. Many nobles who had before feared to declare themſelves, now reſorted quick to his ſtandard. The meaner ranks of people, ever wavering in their ſentiments, and capricious in their actions, once more declared in his favour, and made vows for his ſafety. Every thing ſeemed to ſmile, and he proceeded into the county of Derby to ravage the eſtates of thoſe perſons who had eſpouſed the oppoſite cauſe.

Leiceſter then firſt learned his ſucceſſes, and trembled for the event. He raiſed the ſiege of Rocheſter, which his army was then attacking, and retreated haſtily to London, where he was joined by a conſiderable body of the citizens.

Finding his forces now more than equal in ſtrength to thoſe of the Prince, he determined to ſeek an engagement, and advanced to Lewes in Suſſex, whither Edward haſtened to meet him.

While

While the armies lay within ſight of each other, Leiceſter, willing to give ſome colouring of legality to his ambition, pretended to be ſtill anxious for peace, and diſpatched a herald to the camp of Edward, with propoſals of accommodation, which he well knew would never be accepted.

The event anſwered his expectations. They were rejected with indignation and contempt, and both ſides prepared for the battle with equal reſolution and animoſity.

It was then night, and the enſuing morn was deſtined to uſher in a ſcene of carnage and deſolation.

As the herald was quitting the camp, Alan ſtepped haſtily after him—"Tell Henry De Montfort," ſaid he, in a low voice, and pointing to his helmet, "that I ſtill wear the pledge of his defiance—Bid him ſeek me out to-morrow, and regain it if he can."

"And

"And I too," returned the herald, "bear thee a meſſage, but not from the ſon of Montfort." At theſe words he put a paper into the hands of Alan—"Peruſe that," added he, "and give me thy reply." The contents were to this effect:

"If the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne yet re-
"tains any kind remembrance of Iſa-
"bella, and of Gertrude, he will repair
"at the hour of midnight to the ſouth
"ſide of the copſe that ſkirts the en-
"campment of Edward. Let not appre-
"henſion reſtrain his ſteps—the names
"of Iſabella and of Gertrude ſhall be his
"ſecurity from danger."

"They ſhall!" cried the youth, with vivacity. "Inform thoſe who ſent thee," continued he, "that the compliance of Alan ſhall demonſtrate his attachment." The herald bowed to this reply, and departed.

Alan

Alan, apprehending that the zeal of Gerald might lead him to commit some indiſcretion, communicated not to him the tenor of his promiſe; but when the hour of appointment came, he took his way to the copſe, unattended.

He had not remained long there when two women approached, who, though diſguiſed with veils, he diſcovered to be the Counteſs and her daughter. The bright beams of the moon rendering objects eaſily diſcernable, they perceived and knew him at the ſame time.—— "Ah!" exclaimed Gertrude, in a low and tremulous voice, "Ah! my mother, it is he—it is Alan!"

The ſon of Fitz-Oſborne ruſhed forward, and threw himſelf at the feet of the Counteſs. "Noble Lady," cried he, "I come to thank thy condeſcenſions, and to learn thy commands."

"I expected no leſs from thy fearleſs and gallant ſpirit," anſwered the Counteſs,

teſs, "I am about to give thee an equal proof of my confidence and my eſteem."

So ſaying, ſhe ſeated herſelf on the ground, and motioning with her head to Gertrude and to Alan, they placed themſelves beſide her.

A deep ſilence reigned for ſome moments. The daughter of Leiceſter, trembling and confuſed, alternately glanced her eyes from the ground to the countenance of her mother. She once turned them towards Alan, when perceiving his fixed on her with an expreſſion of wonder and anxiety, ſhe haſtily averted them. The Counteſs ſeemed to labour too under ſome confuſion, but at length recovering her wonted ſedateneſs—"Eſteemed youth," cried ſhe, preſſing the hand of Alan, "why muſt I call him my enemy, to whom my heart would give the endearing name of ſon?

At theſe words Gertrude ſunk gently on her mother's breaſt—"Be compoſed, thou

thou trembler," ſaid the Counteſs;—"ſhame not in thy ſenſations. He who is the cauſe is worthy of having inſpired them."

The ſon of Fitz-Oſborne, now ſtruck with an idea he had never before conceived, was moved to his inmoſt ſoul. The Counteſs did not ſuffer him to continue in ſuſpenſe.

"Youth, canſt thou gueſs from whence ariſe the emotions of my daughter?"—ſaid ſhe ſmiling. Then aſſuming an air of more ſolemnity—"Yes," continued ſhe, "why ſhould I conceal it?—Gertrude Montfort loves thee, Alan, and I approve her affection—I do more—I applaud it. Thou art the ſon of my election, and of my wiſhes. Leiceſter himſelf is ſenſible of thy virtues, and diſdains not thy alliance. But I will confeſs to thee, that there are ſome ſacrifices required on thy part. Thou muſt be all our own—thou muſt quit Henry—thou muſt

muſt deſert his ſon. But thy deſertion will be honourable and advantageous. In joining Leiceſter, thou wilt join the cauſe of liberty. In eſpouſing his daughter, thou wilt ſecure thy fortunes and thy happineſs.

"And does this beauteous maid?" interrupted Alan. He paused. "Yes," reſumed the Counteſs, "ſhe loves thee, ſhe is wholly thine; I anticipate thy joy; I doubt not thy compliance; I hail thee as my ſon, as the ſpouſe of Gertrude!"

"O, Heaven!" cried Alan, faltering, "Edward—my country!"

"Think of thy future bride," ſaid the Counteſs; "think of liberty—of wealth—of power, and let me lead thee to the camp of Leiceſter." She took his hand—"Never! never!" cried he, in a violent accent.

"My mother, he diſdains us," ſaid Gertrude, riſing, "O, my mother, let us return—let us not await his diſdain?"

"Diſ-

"Diſdain thee, ſweet maid!" cried he, in a paſſionate tone. "No, with my life." He fell at her feet; he preſſed her paſſive hand to his lips. "Come," ſaid the Counteſs, inſpired with freſh hope; "come, we will return together; let me lead my children to their other parent."

"Condeſcending and noble Lady," cried Alan, in a tone of grief, "would I could obey thee, but my honour—my prince ——No—never—never ſhall the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne merit the appellation of traitor."

"'Tis well," ſaid the Counteſs, haughtily, "we deſerve thy ſcorn, ſince we have incurred our own. Come, Gertrude, we will leave this inſenſible—this ungrateful youth, to the reproaches of his own heart."

"Oh!" ſaid the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne, catching her robe, and throwing himſelf into an attitude of ſupplication, "O were that heart laid open to thy view, thou wouldſt

wouldſt perceive it neither inſenſible nor ungrateful, but torn by conflicting emotions, and pierced with anguiſh and regret! Hear me, Lady—hear perhaps the laſt ſounds which may ever greet thy ear from an unfortunate. Did I attend only to my own inclinations, moſt gladly—moſt joyfully would I accede to thy propoſal, but I have higher duties to fulfil—duties which cannot be neglected without ſubſequent remorſe and ſhame——The generous Edward has not only honoured me with his notice, but his love. Shall I requite theſe with a black and treacherous deſertion? No—the ſoul of Iſabella muſt deteſt me, were I capable of ingratitude ſo baſe."

"Lovely maid," continued he, addreſſing himſelf to Gertrude, "Alan dares to hope thy pity, not thy reſentment.—He bids thee farewel—he implores Heaven's choiceſt bleſſings on thy head—he ſupplicates that the number of thy feli-

cities

cities may equal, if poſſible, the ſum of thy virtues!"

In ſaying theſe words he let go his hold. The Counteſs regarded him with a milder look: Gertrude breathed a deep ſigh; and both turning from him, walked away with a quick pace, and were ſoon out of ſight.

Alan gazed towards the path they had taken—"I am beloved," ſaid he, ſighing, "beloved by the daughter of Leiceſter, and I reject her. What barbarity!—But honour—gratitude—all forbid my compliance. I obey their dictates;—I will merit the approbation of my own heart. Though I cannot be happy, I will not ceaſe to be virtuous."

In ſaying theſe words, he returned to the camp with a dejected aſpect, and unſteady ſteps. He found Gerald watching with the centinels. His abſence had given that faithful creature a thouſand fears, and he reſolved to take no reſt till he beheld him again.

The

The ſadneſs of Alan's deportment moderated the joy he felt for his return, and he attended him to his tent with a countenance of ſolicitude and concern. Alan penetrated his thoughts; but the ſecret of Gertrude was too important and too ſacred to be even intruſted with Gerald. He therefore aſſumed an air of more compoſure, and pretending drowſineſs diſmiſſed him.

Repoſe however came not to his boſom. Gertrude was ſtill preſent to his ideas. He fancied he ſaw her weak, pale, ſinking under the agonies of ill-requited love. His heart bled with compaſſion and regret, and drops of tender pity trembled in his eyes.

"O why," would he cry inceſſantly, "why do the rules of honour contradict the ſoft affections of the ſoul? gentle maid, and ſweet as gentle!—but for this ſtern monitor, Alan would caſt himſelf at thy feet, would breathe impaſſioned vows in thy ear, would render thee ſole arbitreſs of his fate!"

While

While the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne conſumed the ſhort remainder of the night in ſighs and exclamations, ſcenes of a ſimilar nature paſſed in the camp of Leiceſter. At the return of the Counteſs, her looks, and the tears of Gertrude, too plainly manifeſted to Monfort their ill ſucceſs. The relation of the Counteſs ſoon confirmed his ſuſpicions, and ſtung his pride.

"Ah!" cried he, in a tone of haughtineſs and anger, "this inſolent ſtripling ſhall mourn his raſh rejection in tears of blood, before the ſetting of to-morrow's ſun!"

"My father!" exclaimed Gertrude, flinging herſelf at his feet. The Earl beheld her poſture with indignation.——

"Call me not thy father," cried he, "I diſdain the name!—what doſt thou deprecate my threats?—thou who ſhouldſt ſtimulate my arm to deeds of vengeance—poor ſpirited girl—my heart diſclaims thy

thy alliance—hence!—leſt I ſpurn thee!" The weeping Gertrude attempted to ariſe—her limbs tottered—her eyes cloſed—ſhe ſunk again on the earth.

"Barbarian!" exclaimed the Counteſs, ruſhing towards her, "Barbarian, thou haſt deſtroyed my child!"

"What," cried the Earl, "is Iſabella become the advocate of meanneſs?—will ſhe encourage the weakneſs of her daughter?"—"go," continued he, in an ironical tone, "go—thou hadſt beſt woo the ſtripling again—implore his compaſſion:—perhaps he will have pity on the love-ſick Gertrude—perhaps he will relent—thou haſt but to kneel at his feet—to weep—to ſupplicate—meet office for the wife of Montfort!"

"Ceaſe thy inſulting taunts," ſaid the Counteſs, who had now taken Gertrude in her arms, "the ſoul of Iſabella is as remote from meanneſs as thy own, though alive to the feelings of maternal love."

In

In speaking thus, he endeavoured to restore fortitude to life, and to allay [illegible] ed. "Come, my child, "come, we will leave [illegible] of repose."

"Repose!" repeated Gertrude in a tone of anguish. The stern look of the Earl prevented her from saying more: she arose, pressed the hand of her mother, and both retired from his eyes to their own.

Scarce had the rising sun begun to streak the horizon with purple, when the son of Rhys Gethin started from his sleepless couch, roused by the chearful voices of the soldiers, and the martial din of clashing shields.

The idea of Gertrude, her love, her despair, all sorrowful reflexions vanished; the noble ardour of glory alone possessed him. He thought of the battle; chid his slothful grief, and hastened to seek the Prince.

Edward advanced to meet him with a ſmiling countenance, "My brave aſſociate," cried he, "this morn gives us the poſſeſſion of our rights, or an honourable death."

"May conqueſt crown the ſword of my Prince!" anſwered Alan, with ſparkling eyes, "it muſt—it will!—Soon ſhall thy proud enemies bite the ground in agony!"

"I accept the preſage," returned Edward, "but come, time preſſes. Let us animate the hearts of our men."—He then, accompanied by Alan, paſſed into the midſt of the camp. The King and his brother were already there. At the ſight of Edward, the ſoldiers thronging round him, deſired with loud clamours to be led againſt the foe. "We will follow our Prince," cried they, "to victory, or to death!"

Their zeal affected Edward, "yet a few hours," ſaid he to himſelf, "and ruthleſs

ruthleſs war muſt transform half theſe gallant hearts into pale and bleeding corſes. For a moment concern ſhaded his features. He recollected the juſtice of his cauſe, and it was no more.

The army was now quickly put into array of battle, and formed into three diviſions. Edward placed himſelf at the head of the right wing, the King of the Romans commanded the left, and Henry continued in the center.

The ſhouts of Leiceſter's forces, already advancing, aſſailed their ears. Edward quitted his poſt for a moment, and riding through the ranks, "my friends," cried he, "remember you fight for your King, your Prince, and your liberties, againſt tyranny and uſurpation—think what glory awaits the victors, and what ſhame the vanquiſhed!" "While we have ſuch a leader as Edward," returned they with one voice, "we dread not the latter."

The two armies now approached each other, and the engagement began. A

ſhower of darts filled the air, and obſcured the light of day. The loud clangor of the trumpets ſtifled the cries of the wounded, and inflamed the aſſailants with new fury.

Another diſcharge of arrows was a prelude to cloſer combat. They engaged ſword in hand. No ſtroke fell harmleſs; and mutual carnage ſoon died the field with blood.

While horror and deſolation ſtalked triumphant, Alan, who fought cloſe by the Prince's ſide, perceived Henry De Montfort advancing towards him. At the ſight of each other, their eyes flaſhed fire and defiance.

"I come," cried young Montfort aloud, "I come to avenge a ſiſter!"

Alan ſtarted. "I will avoid the brother of Gertrude," ſaid he, retreating a few paces.

"Doſt thou fly me?" exclaimed young Montfort, "is this the fruit of thy daring?

daring!—but I forget me——cowards abound in boats."

"Ha!" returned Alan, "coward doſt thou ſay?" He ruſhed forward—Montfort met his attack——they cloſed——their ſwords gleamed dreadful—blood followed every blow, and encreaſed their rage—they flung away their ſhields and redoubled their exertions. At length, Alan pierced the right arm of Montfort. His weapon fell from his hand, and left him at the mercy of the victor. "I give thee thy life," cried the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne, "I give it thee for the ſake of Gertrude." He waited not for a reply, but again joined the Prince.

Young Montfort was borne off the field by ſome of his own party; gnaſhing his teeth, and curſing the ſucceſs of his conqueror.

The Londoners commanded by Nicholas Seagrave, now felt the fury of Edward. "My mother!" cried he, ruſhing upon them.

That word ſeemed to give his arm more than mortal force. Terror and deſtruction trod in his ſteps. His ſoldiers, animated by his example, aſſaulted the enemy with ſuch vigour, that they were obliged to give way. Edward, eager to revenge the Queen, purſued them with unrelenting ſlaughter, and Alan well ſeconded his blows.

Leiceſter, mean time, attacked the left wing with all his forces. It reſiſted bravely, but numbers conquered valour. The fortune of the day once more changed, it was routed, and the King and his brother taken priſoners.

Edward now returned, flushed with conqueſt, from the purſuit. What a ſpectacle awaited him!—The field ſtrewed with the bodies of his adherents; ſome writhing in agony, and breathing their laſt ſighs at his feet.

The intelligence of his father's defeat and captivity reached him at the ſame moment.

moment. "Then all is lost," exclaimed Alan.

"We have despair left us," interrupted Alan, "let us wreak no cruelty on our enemies—let us die with honour."

The soldiers, with loud shouts, protested they would spill the last drop of their blood in defence of their Prince.

"And I, my faithful companions," returned Edward, "will mingle mine with yours."

While this brave troop prepared to execute their declarations, a herald arrived from Leicester, under pretence of negociating terms of peace.

The Prince, unacquainted with deceit himself, suspected none in these proposals. While he was considering how to answer them, his little army was suddenly surrounded by Leicester's forces, and he found himself obliged to submit to whatever terms the conqueror pleased to impose.

Shame and indignation now poſſeſſed the ſoul of Edward. "Is this," cried he, turning to Alan, "is this the favour I promiſed thee?—my young friend, thou haſt done ill to embrace the cauſe of Edward.—O Eleanora," added he, ſighing, "wilt thou bluſh for thy ſpouſe?—wilt thou deſpiſe him?—My beloved, who ſhall defend thee from inſult?—who ſhall guard thee from wrongs?"

At that moment another meſſage arrived from Leiceſter. The Earl required Edward and Henry De Almain, one of the royal generals, to ſurrender themſelves in the room of the King and his brother, whom he promiſed to releaſe.

The Prince ſubmitted indignantly to what he could not avoid. Alan would not be ſeparated from him. "The ſon of Fitz-Oſborne," cried he, "will not be free while Edward is a captive." The Prince attempted to diſſuade him from this reſolution, but in vain. He attended his

his steps to Leicester's presence, followed by [illegible]

Montfort beheld his royal prisoner with looks of exultation and triumph. "Well," cried he, with an insulting air, "Edward is a prisoner, and Leicester conquers."

"Perform thy agreement," said the Prince, coolly.

"Thou art too hasty," resumed the Earl, "thy impetuosity has already cost thee dear.—I pity, but will not imitate it.—Leicester deliberates before he acts."

"I should not have expected sincerity from a traitor," replied Edward.

"Hah!" exclaimed Montfort, "thou art too bold—recollect thou art my captive, and dread my power!"

"I despise it," answered the Prince, assuming a disdainful smile. Leicester was going to reply, when casting his eyes on Mortimer, "ha! art thou here?" he exclaimed, "now on my soul, thy info-

hence shall meet its just reward!—Bear him hence," continued he, turning to the soldiers, "bind him in strong chains, and see that on your lives you suffer him not to escape."

"Proud Lord," exclaimed Edward, "dareſt thou inſult my ſervants in my very preſence?—Soldiers," added he reſolutely, "obey not the voice of this traitor—behold the ſon of your King, and give heed to his commands." They had already ſeized Alan, but theſe words ſtruck them with ſurprize and fear. They quitted their holds.

"Daſtards!" cried Leiceſter, enraged, "am I not your general!—dare you diſobey me!—Prince," continued he, "I will prove to thee that this is the camp of Leiceſter, not of Edward—with this youth I have a reckoning of a common ſort."

The ſoldiers again ſurrounded Alan, and led him off. That action redoubled the

the cause of the Prince, he however continued silent, sensible that complaint on such a subject, could answer no other purpose than feeding the pride of Leicester.

As the mountain oak, when assailed by boisterous winds, bends its awful head to the tempest, yet remains unshaken at its roots; so the gallant Edward submitted to his fate, yet continued unsubdued in spirit and in courage.

Leicester, willing to secure his noble prisoner, had him conducted under a strong guard to the castle of Dover, which he allotted for the place of his confinement; and then with the residue of his captives proceeded to London, and possessed himself of the palace of Westminster. There, instead of setting the King and his brother at liberty, he rendered their bondage more strict than ever, and contenting himself for the present, with keeping Alan in durance, he determined to secure his power before he indulged his resentment.

Gertrude,

Gertrude, [illegible] this youth, poured [illegible] the bolom of her mother. The Countess, far from condemning the [illegible] of her love, fought only how to allay her apprehenſions. She enquired of the ſoldiers, whether the ſon of Sir Osborne had fallen in the field, or been taken captive. Their anſwer ſatisfied her of his ſafety, and ſhe haſtened to impart the tidings to her daughter.

"Alas!" ſaid Gertrude, raiſing her ſwoln eyes, "Alas! dear mother, what avails his being now alive?—Is he not in the power of Leiceſter—of his moſt cruel enemy? Ah! my father—to redreſs the fancied injury of Gertrude, thou wilt murder her repoſe!"

"Spare thyſelf theſe needleſs fears," anſwered the Counteſs, "Leiceſter will not take a baſe advantage of the chance of war."

"Ah!"

ceed Gertrude, if he be not amended—if he not protect—if he not reconcile?" The Countess frowned.

"Pardon, my mother," cried she, "pardon the inadvertent exclamations of a breaking heart—of a heart which, however slighted, however disdained, cannot lose the image of Alan—cannot cease its perturbations for his danger—cannot cease its vows and its wishes for his safety. O, my mother, this heart may be mean, may be unworthy the daughter of Leicester, but its emotions cannot be restrained or corrected, while Gertrude exists." "Dear youth," continued she, "dear son of Fitz-Osborne—how know I but this moment takes thee from me for ever? And she who would die to save thee, is the cause of thy death—she who would shed her blood to procure thee ease, is the sole cause of thy sufferings." "O, my mother! hide that thought from the wretched Gertrude; assist—comfort—bless her, and set Alan free!"

"What

"What can I do?" ſaid the Counteſs. "Shall I incur the anger of my huſband, or deſtroy my child?" She pauſed. "Ah!" ſaid ſhe again, "dear Gertrude, I cannot reſiſt thee—thou haſt conquered." Gertrude kiſſed her hand in ſilence. "But," continued the Counteſs, "how ſhall we accompliſh the freedom of Alan?" "Gold, my mother—all-powerful gold."

The Counteſs ſmiled—"We will try its power," cried ſhe; "but we will firſt try what our ſolicitations may do with Leiceſter."

Gertrude ſhook her head, doubtingly, and the Counteſs purſued her purpoſe. She found her ſpouſe and ſon together: Young Montfort had his arm in a ſling, and looked weak and pale from loſs of blood.

"Well, Iſabella," ſaid Leiceſter, in a triumphant tone, "Fortune has at length fully crowned our wiſhes—The tyrant is enſlaved, and thou ſhalt yet ſit in the throne

throne of Eleanora*! But we must observe cautious measures, else will the simple herd, who so loudly bellow for freedom, without knowing what it means, take the alarm, and frustrate our designs."

"Thou art wise," replied the Countess, "and thou canst take these measures—for me, I join in thy satisfaction, and I utter vows for thy success. Meantime I have a request to make thee, which, if thou knowest thy own glory, thou will not refuse. Let the first act of thy power prove thee worthy of possessing it."

"Ha!" interrupted the Earl, "thou dost not ask me to deliver Henry and his brother to freedom?" "No," resumed the Countess, "it is for Alan Fitz-Osborne I implore thee." —"What!" —cried young Montfort, "I will my mor-

* The Queen.

ther intercede for the enemy of her ſon?"

"How long is he become thy enemy?" aſked Iſabella.——"Behold one proof of the love he bears thy family;"—returned he, holding out his wounded arm.

"Ah!" cried the Counteſs indignantly;—"is the ſon of Iſabella—the deſcendant of Kings, capable of bearing low malice for an accidental offence?—thou didſt thy duty in fighting for thy father—Alan followed his, in ſupporting his Prince—His zeal was not the leſs virtuous for being miſtaken."

"But when I tell thee," returned young Montfort—"that this virtuous youth—this favourite of my mother, ſnigled me from the croud of warriors, ruſhed upon me with the fury of a raging lion—thirſted for my blood—would have plunged his ſword in my breaſt—will Iſabella condemn my reſentment—will ſhe prevent my vengeance?"

The

The Countess started, an air of incredulity sat upon her features. "Are thy words true?" cried she, "did Alan thirst for the blood of my son—of the brother of Gertrude." "Yes," such is the love he bears her," cried the Earl. "Cease Isabella, cease to indulge the foolish fantasies of a simple girl; recall a sense of thy own dignity—think thou art the wife of Montfort—the future sovereign of England." The Countess replied not, but quitting the apartment, returned to her daughter; her looks denoted anger and confusion.

"Ah! my mother," exclaimed Gertrude—"I read ill success in thy aspect.

"Speak no more of Alan," replied the Countess, frowning—"he is unworthy of thy care, and my solicitude."

"My mother!"——

"Peace!" returned Isabella; "canst thou plead for him who sought thy brother's

ther's life?—If he was noble—if he was grateful, would he not rather have bared his own boſom to the ſword of Henry De Montfort, than have aſſaulted his."

"And he is both!" cried Gertrude, with courage; "my mother, they have abuſed thine ear with a baſe falſhood—believe not their intelligence; Alan did not ſeek the life of Henry De Montfort, my cruel brother rather purſued his. Recall to thy remembrance, the time when returning from captivity we ſpoke of Alan—recall how Henry De Montfort ſickened at his praiſes—how the envy of his heart diſplayed itſelf on his countenance, and was heard from his lips. O my mother, recall alſo the nobleneſs of Alan—recall his rejection of me—was it not dictated by virtue? did not his boſom bleed with compaſſion, and his eyes fill with tears."

The Counteſs ſighed, and looked irreſolute. Gertrude perceived the yielding

of

of her ſoul—ſhe threw herſelf at her feet.

"My mother," reſumed ſhe; "he would have loved Gertrude, had not honour forbade him; and ſhall we not reſpect that honour, though it afflicts us? Yes, Iſabella will hear the prayer of her kneeling child—ſhe will not ſacrifice her daughter's peace, to the pride and malice of her ſon—ſhe will follow the generous movements of her heart—ſhe will preſerve Alan from the machinations of his enemies—ſhe will give him ſafety and freedom."

A ſhower of tears which accompanied this addreſs, contributed to ſubdue the Counteſs. She aſſented—ſhe promiſed every thing to her beloved Gertrude. Nought now remained, but to get intelligence where Alan was confined; Iſabella inquired of her domeſtics, and they informed her he was immured in a ſubterraneous dungeon of the palace.

Accompanied

Accompanied by Gertrude, ſhe repaired to this place an hour before midnight. As the keeper had been already bribed, they were admitted without difficulty.

Alan turned his head at their entrance, but he could not riſe, his limbs were chained to the floor, and Gerald ſhared the fate of his maſter.

"O Heaven!" cried the Counteſs, "what barbarity!" She called the keeper, and the ſight of more gold ſoon prevailed upon him to looſe the bonds that held the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne and his domeſtic in thraldom. Gertrude ſtood aloof, pale and trembling, ſhe opened her lips, but cloſed them again without uttering a word.

Alan aroſe, he obſerved her ſituation. "Twice!" cried he, "has Henry De Montfort entered my dungeon—twice has he entered to inſult me!—But he is the ſon of Iſabella—he is the brother of Ger-

Gertrude," added he, kiſſing a hand of each.

"Generous youth!" ſaid the Counteſs, "how haſt thou been injured!" "Did I not tell thee my mother?" interrupted Gertrude. "Yes," returned ſhe, "thy aſſeveration was true; but Alan" ſhe continued, turning towards him, "we come to ſet thee free—Fly, my ſon, fly from the cruelty of thy enemies, and give eaſe to two hearts who yearn for thy ſafety."

"No,"—cried he—"let Montfort uſe his power—the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne will not diſgrace himſelf by a cowardly eſcape."

"Barbarous, and ungrateful!" exclaimed Gertrude;—"thou haſt already rejected me—wilt thou give me new pangs by courting thy own deſtruction?"—"ſweet maid,"—ſaid he, taking her hand, "and art thou intereſted for Alan?—wouldſt thou preſerve him?—

Ah!

Ah! rather deſpiſe—hate—revile this unfortunate, and leave him to his fate!"

"Can Gertrude do ſo?" ſhe replied, in a reproachful tone, "has ſhe given thee cauſe to think her ſo ungentle?——Ah! did thy heart"—ſhe pauſed. "My child," ſaid the Counteſs, "he loves us not—he deſpiſes our counſels."

"Noble lady," replied Alan, "I am grateful for thy counſel—but I cannot follow it, without diſhonour and ſhame."

"Cruel!" exclaimed Gertrude, with ſtreaming eyes, "then expect to ſee me expire at thy feet—yes, I ſwear to die if thou continueſt thy purpoſe—I ſwear before Heaven—and I call the liſtening angels to atteſt my vow!—if thou doſt dread the misjudging cenſures of the world more than my death, prepare to glut thy ſight with a ſpectacle of horror."

"O ſpare me the thought!" cried Alan, "I conſent—I comply—do with me as thou wilt!"

Gerald,

Gerald, a ſilent, though diſturbed ſpectator of this ſcene, now fell at Gertrude's feet, and implored a thouſand bleſſings on her head. She beheld him with a look of kindneſs, and taking off a bracelet from her arm—"thy maſter," cried ſhe, "would ſcorn my gifts, or———"

Alan darted his eye at the bracelet; he ſnatched it from her hand, "precious gift!" ſaid he, kiſſing it eagerly, "lie thee next my heart—no other ſhall poſſeſs thee!"

The daughter of Montfort turned to Iſabella, "I have conquered!" ſaid ſhe aloud. Then lowering her voice to a whiſper, "my mother, he is not indifferent, he almoſt loves me!"

The Counteſs ſhared her ſatisfaction—"time preſſes," ſaid ſhe, to the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne, "We muſt part." She made a ſign to the keeper, and he inſtantly opened the door of the dungeon.

"Guard thy life well," ſaid Gertrude,

in

in a faultering voice, as Alan ſtepped forward, "remember that another depends on it." He bowed on her hand, kiſſed that of the Counteſs, and they ſeparated.

The keeper attended him and Gerald through the town: he replied to the watch-word of the centinels, and they were ſuffered to paſs without oppoſition. He then left them, and before morning dawned, they meaſured many weary paces.

Alan, occupied by conflicting thoughts, wandered on without any fixed direction. Gerald, whoſe fears converted every buſh into a purſuer, ceaſed not to urge his maſter to better ſpeed, and at length reminded him of Gertrude's injunction.

That name operated upon Alan like a taliſman, he quickened his ſteps, and they ſoon reached the entrance of a foreſt, where Gerald eagerly propoſed to remain till evening ſhould ſuffer them to purſue their journey with more ſecurity.

Alan

Alan conſented, they explored the moſt hidden ſhades. The ſon of Fitz-Oſborne threw himſelf at the root of a ſpreading oak, and pulling the bracelet from his boſom, gave himſelf up to painful meditation.

Gerald, though inſenſible to his own wants, felt thoſe of his maſter. Bread and water had been their only ſuſtenance for two days, and they were now even deprived of that ſcanty pittance.

The faithful Gerald trod through the foreſt with cautious ſteps, anxious to diſcover whether it contained any wild fruits. His ſearch was ſucceſsful, he returned with that ſimple repaſt to his maſter, and obliged him to partake of it.

They now conſulted on a place of refuge, and Gerald mentioned the caſtle of Fitz-Oſborne——"Though," added he, "thou haſt an enemy there—Lord William."

"And I have alſo a friend," interrupted Alan, "a true friend—my dear Alice! I will haſten to embrace her—to ſpeak peace to her afflicted ſoul—to reſtore to her, her ſon—not fortunate—yet not unworthy."

They continued converſing 'till evening caſt her grey mantle over the earth. It was the ſignal for their departure. They aroſe, and quitting the foreſt, choſe the moſt unfrequented paths.

In paſſing along, they overtook an old pilgrim, who ſeemed to tread with weary feet. Age ſilvered his locks, and his furrowed aſpect wore the traces of deep affliction.

"Save thee, venerable ſire," cried Alan, in a kind tone, "the weight of years is a ſufficient burden for thee; ſuffer my domeſtic to bear that ſcrip, and accept my ſupporting arm." He advanced and preſented it to him.

"Courteous youth," replied the pilgrim, "Heaven will reward thy charity, but

but I take not thy offer, for this ſituation is alike the effect of my choice and of my crimes."

Alan drew back his hand.

"Miſtake not, youth," reſumed the pilgrim, "my crimes were partly involuntary, and perhaps the mercy of an all-righteous Being may accept a bitter penance and unceaſing tears as ſome atonement."

Alan heard him with compaſſion, and again offered his hand. "No," ſaid the pilgrim, "no, kind youth, I will perſevere to the end. But tell me, I pray thee, and let me not ſeem importunate, tell me thy name; I once was well acquainted with features reſembling thine, tell me what happy parents call thee ſon?"

"Alas!" replied the youth, "my parents have no being; prudence requires concealment, but I cannot doubt that countenance. I am the ſon of Alan Fitz-Oſborne."

"Bleſſed God!" cried the ſtranger, in a voice of emotion, "art thou the offſpring of Fitz-Oſborne?—of that hero? —yes, thy aſpect bears the ſame noble impreſſion of candour, of valour, and of generoſity!—thou haſt the ſame ſtature too—all—all—declare thee to be indeed his ſon!"

"Thou kneweſt my ſire then?" ſaid Alan ſurprized—"knew him, moſt ſure I did! often, often have we ruſhed together through the enſanguined field; often have the proud creſted ſquadrons of the enemy trembled beneath our aſſociated ſwords! yes, I knew him well—my ſoul was then free from ſtain or remorſe, he was my friend, my companion, my brother!"

"And thy name?" cried Alan.

"Arnulf De Montmorency," cried the old man, "a name that once commanded honour and reſpect."

"But

"But why doſt thou travel thus unattended? What ſecret ſorrow forces theſe ſighs from thy breaſt? Does thy ſire yet live, or doſt thou mourn his loſs?"

"It is a long time ſince the ſilent tomb received him," anſwered Alan.

"What, is Fitz-Oſborne no more?" cried the pilgrim, a tear rolled down his cheek; he wiped it away, and again turned towards Alan, "many years have paſſed," ſaid he, "ſince I deſerted the world, and forſook the ſociety of men, yet this moment Fitz-Oſborne is preſent to my thoughts; thou art his image, when I look in thy face, I recall his friendſhip, and I deplore his death! blame me not, I ſhould congratulate thee on the attainment of his rights, but I cannot."

Alan preſſed his hand, "I poſſeſs not theſe rights," ſaid he, "I am friendleſs, dependant, and perſecuted."

"Thy words are a myſtery to my ear," ſaid the old Man, "yet though I

do not underſtand them, I will tell thee that the poor cell of Montmorency ſhall afford a refuge to the ſon of his friend. I learn that cruel faction has armed my miſguided countrymen againſt each other: two days ſince, I paſſed through the field of carnage, in my return from the ſhrine of St. Thomas; perhaps thou wert of the party of the vanquiſhed?"

"It is true," replied the youth, looking down.

"Shame not at the chance of war," ſaid Montmorency, "but glory that thou haſt eſpouſed a juſt cauſe, though unſucceſsful. We ſhall reach my cell before the morning breaks, and there thou mayeſt defy purſuit."

"My maſter," cried Gerald, "accept the propoſal of this venerable perſon; there is danger in going to the caſtle of Fitz-Oſborne; we are not aſſured that the Earl will protect thee, and thou haſt every thing to dread from the malice of Lord William."

"Who

"Who is this Earl?" demanded the pilgrim.

"Walter Fitz-Oſborne," anſwered Alan.

"Ha! Walter, I knew him; he was the reverſe of thy ſire. But why doſt thou call him Earl? Is not that title due to thee?"

Alan's cheek took a deeper hue: "I will unravel to thee theſe ſeeming incongruities," ſaid he, "when we arrive at thy cell, ſuffer me to be ſilent 'till then."

The old man renewed not his enquiries. They purſued their route without ſpeaking, and in a few hours reached the cell.

It was delved into the ſide of a ſteep mountain. Moſs and ivy intermingled, covered the front, and from the top hung a craggy and pointed rock, which appeared ready to cruſh thoſe who entered. Juſt below a dark ſtream, murmuring amongſt ſome rugged pebbles, by its hoarſe and melancholy noiſe, ſeemed to

declare this ſolitary ſpot the habitation of deſpair and woe.

The pilgrim led in his gueſts, and then bidding them not to be diſturbed by his abſence, quitted them for a while. In a ſhort time he returned, bending under the weight of a large bundle of freſh ruſhes. Alan haſtened to relieve him from his burden.

"My ſon," cried Montmorency, "behold thy bed, it is a luxury I allow not to myſelf: long have theſe limbs been unuſed to any better couch than the bare and damp earth. Say, canſt thou reconcile thyſelf to the auſterities of my life?"

"Ah! father," replied Alan, "my youth can well diſpenſe with thoſe delicacies, which thy feeble age has need of."

"The wants of nature are few and ſimple," ſaid the pilgrim, "but man, —capricious man, has multiplied them

to

to infinity; vainly imagining, that by extending his deſires he can encreaſe his pleaſures. Alas! my ſon, is not their gratification always attended with ſatiety, with diſguſt, and often with remorſe?"

"See," continued he, opening his ſcrip, and taking from thence ſome morſels of brown bread, and a few dry fruits, "theſe ſuffice to allay my hunger, and the beverage of the limpid rill aſſuages my thirſt. What more could the moſt luxurious viands, and the moſt coſtly wines produce?—yes, they might pamper a depraved appetite—deſpicable conſideration! God has formed man in his own image, and ſhall he eraſe the likeneſs by the vile purſuits of ſenſuality?"

"Pardon me," ſaid the ſon of Fitz-Oſborne, "I hear thee with reverence and reſpect, but are not thy words too ſtrict? Vicious gratifications ſhould ever

be avoided; but will not a moderate uſe of the bleſſings of life better fulfill the will of the deity, than that rigid and auſtere ſeverity, which ſeeking only mortification, ſeems to deſpiſe his gifts, and to conſider them as valueleſs?"

"Thus reaſons youth," reſumed Montmorency, with a ſtern air. "Sanguine in its hopes, boundleſs in its deſires, it contemplates them as laudable, and conſiders the admonitions of age as ſour and abſurd." "Ah! father," interrupted Alan, eagerly, "far different are my thoughts.—I will revere thy counſels—I will hear thy precepts—I will engrave them on my heart!"

The countenance of Montmorency loſt its ſternneſs. He graſped the hand of Alan. "Thou art ingenuous," cried he, "thou art ſincere—may the commerce of the world not corrupt thy ſincerity, nor delude thy imagination!—Alas, my ſon!—in condemning the purſuits and the

the paſſions of humanity, I condemn myſelf—thou wilt learn from my ſtory that dear bought experience has given me ſome right to become the monitor of others. Yet have I this right?" cried he in a tone of anguiſh, "I, who have been impetuous, unjuſt! I, who am polluted with blood—who am a murderer, an aſſaſſin!"

Alan trembled. The old man perceived his emotions. "I have ſhocked thee," ſaid he, "I regard myſelf with horror and deteſtation; no wonder I ſhould incur thine." He looked up, he beat his breaſt, he uttered a hollow groan, repeated it, and muttered ſome incoherent ſounds. Then aſſuming an appearance of more compoſure—— "Youth," ſaid he, "reſt thee on theſe ruſhes; I go to fulfil my morning penance; follow not my ſteps, leſt an indiſcreet curioſity give me cauſe to be offended with thee."

Alan obeyed, and obliged Gerald to lie beſide him. Wearineſs ſoon ſealed their

eyes

eyes in deep ſlumber, and the old man purſued his purpoſe.

He returned in an hour; they were not yet awake. "Ah!" cried he, gazing at them, "ſuch is the ſleep of innocence; how unlike the reſtleſſneſs of conſcious guilt and remorſe!——Dear injured ſhades," continued he, ſinking on his knees, "bleeding victims of raſh revenge!—Such once were ye; ſo innocent, ſo good, ſo beautiful. Ah! will ye accept the penitence of your murderer? Will ye ſue for his pardon to the throne of offended Omnipotence?"

He aroſe, and retiring to a corner of the cell, continued plunged in a deep and painful meditation till his gueſts awoke.

——

Alan no ſooner opened his eyes, than he thought of Gertrude. Not ſeeing the old man, he fancied himſelf unobſerved, and took the bracelet in his hand. He preſſed it to his lips and to his boſom alternately.

alternately. "Sweet pledge of unmerited affection," murmured he in a tender voice, "never shall Alan behold thee without renewed gratitude and regret."

Montmorency approached him unperceived. "Thou lovest," said he, "blush not; love in itself is laudable, and contemptible is that heart which cannot feel its soft sensations. But, O my son, avoid black suspicion, avoid dire jealousy, they were the cause of my crimes, they are the cause of my penitence and my despair!"

Alan sighed. "Beware of jealousy," repeated the old man.

"Thou mistakest the motive of my agitation," said the son of Fitz-Osborne, "far from entertaining jealousy, I know not even if I love."

"Thou raisest my curiosity," said Montmorency, "and if it will not pain thee, I call for the execution of that promise thou madest me last night."

"I am

"I am prepared to obey thee," anſwered Alan. "Firſt," interrupted the old man, "we will partake of what homely fare my cell affords."

In ſaying thus, he placed the contents of the ſcrip before his gueſts, and encouraged them to eat. Hunger converts the moſt unſavoury viands into dainties. Gerald fed with avidity on the brown bread; he declared it to be ſuperior to the moſt delicate repaſt of luxury.

Alan ſmiled, and turning to Montmorency—"the words of my domeſtic," ſaid he, "confirm thine—that the real wants of nature are few and quickly ſatisfied."

The old man replied by a look of approbation, and after removing the fragments of their meal, deſired Alan to begin his recital.

The youth bowed his head and obeyed. He commenced with the incident of the contract and the ſtigma which had been caſt upon his birth.

Montmorency

Montmorency ſtartled. "Now by Heaven and all things ſacred," interrupted he, "Walter and Maurice are both lying miſcreants!—The noble ſoul of thy ſire never harboured a thought of diſhonour or of fraud—its only weakneſs was too great a confidence in this brother, whom I knew to be baſe, and whom I preſage is a traitor!—But proceed, youth."

Alan reſumed his narration. He mentioned the ſeeming partiality of the uſurper during his infancy, and the care he had taken of his education. He enlarged on the affection of Alice—he was laviſh in the praiſes of that faithful creature. He then ſlightly mentioned his quarrel with Lord William.

Gerald eagerly interrupted him at this part. He would himſelf relate the fray, and celebrate the early heroiſm of his maſter. Montmorency was affected by his zeal—he preſſed his hand, and regarded Alan with looks of admiration.

That

That youth continued his tale. He described the usurper's horrors, and recited the exclamation of his nurse. The old man shuddered. He went on and finished his story without further interruption.

"Noble youth!" said Montmorency, embracing him as he concluded, "noble son of Fitz-Osborne! I perceive thy modest tongue has slightly glanced over those actions which are most worthy of praise; but they will be known and rewarded—Heaven will one day restore to thee the rights, of which treachery has deprived thee.—Yes, my son, base treachery!—A dreadful mystery shadows the fate of thy mother, but it shall be developed, and the vicious shall be ensnared in their own toils. Meantime, let not thy fortitude or thy virtue forsake thee—trust in the protection of the All-powerful, and be mindful of his behests."

"May

"May I obſerve thy council," ſaid Alan with a look of acknowledgment. "But father, ſhould I not relieve the fears of my beloved Alice—perhaps this moment her heart is torn with affliction—perhaps her tears flow for my fancied death—ah! I will go to the caſtle of Fitz-Oſborne—I will fly to my dear Alice."

"No," returned Montmorency, "thou ſhalt not truſt to the uſurper—I will array thy domeſtic in my pilgrim weeds—he ſhall go to thy Alice—he ſhall ſatisfy her of thy ſafety, and bring thee intelligence how matters ſtand."

Gerald caught at the idea—he would depart that inſtant. Montmorency applauded his fidelity, but Alan inſiſted he ſhould devote that day to reſt, and not commence his journey until the enſuing morn.

Gerald murmured but obeyed. The venerable Montmorency now ſeemed beguiled of his ſorrow by the intereſt he took

took in what concerned the ſon of his friend. He obliged him to repeat again all the material occurrences of his life. He wondered afreſh at the recital, and renewed his counſels of reſignation.

Early next morn Gerald prepared for his expedition. When he had put on the diſguiſe, Montmorency bid him take no care for ſuſtenance, as his habit would procure him ſufficient from the charity of well diſpoſed perſons. Gerald had not thought of it; he kiſſed his maſter's hand, and departed with a quick and chearful pace.

When he was gone, Montmorency left Alan for ſome time to perform his uſual duty. The gloom of his countenance on returning pierced the heart of that youth, and encreaſed his deſire to be acquainted with the particulars of a life, which he had ſtrong cauſe to believe eventful.

Montmorency gueſſed his thoughts, and reſolved to gratify his curioſity.

"Young

"Young friend," ſaid he, "I ſee concern in thy features—my grief ſhocks thee, and my auſterities ſurprize thee. I will prove to thee that both are juſt. Sit thee here beſide me and I will relate a tale which will harrow up thy ſoul as thou art compaſſionate, and inſpire thee with horror as thou art virtuous."

"Perhaps," ſaid Alan in a tone of pity, "perhaps it will renew thy anguiſh."

"Alas!" interrupted the old man, "it is always preſent—ſilence cannot extenuate it." Alan now ſeated himſelf on the ground and Montmorency began.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

The Story of Montmorency.

"SPRUNG from a noble and illuſtrious lineage," ſaid he, "the ſentiments of honour ſeemed congenial to my birth, and I poſſeſſed them. But too early left to my own guidance, they were not chaſtened by moderation, or tempered by diſcretion. I loſt both my parents in the years of childhood, and a diſtant kinſman took charge of my education. At the age of twenty, I became my own maſter, by his death."

This

This guardian, who had been himself renowned in arms, took care to inſtill into the young heart of his pupil an ardent love of glory, and a contempt of danger: but his leſſons reached no further; he ſought not to eradicate from my breaſt the ſeeds of pride and revenge, but encouraged the firſt as laudable, and the laſt as juſt. No ſooner was I freed from all reſtraint by his deceaſe, than I quitted the manſion of my anceſtors for the court, where I expected to meet a reception ſuitable to my birth.

Nor was I miſtaken. Henry treated me with obſervance and reſpect, and admitted me as the companion of his pleaſures. Intoxicated by favour, and full of my own importance, I rejected the counſels of my friends with diſdain, and plunging into all manner of diſſoluteneſs and extravagance, ſoon waſted my patrimony, and impaired my health.

Thy noble ſire awoke me from the lethargy of vice. He firſt acquired my eſteem,

eſteem, and then attained my confidence. He painted to me in true colours the folly of my conduct: he changed my heart, he reformed my manners; I was no longer the ſame Montmorency.

Following his advice, I diſcarded the ſhameleſs croud of paraſites who had preyed upon my fortunes. I again viſited my long forſaken manſion. I relieved the wants of my needy vaſſals; I ſpread peace and happineſs through my domains.

Some differences at that time aroſe, between the King of Scotland and Henry. Our monarch thought himſelf injured, and diſpatched a body of forces to invade the territories of his neighbour.

I recollected the leſſon of my kinſman; I joined their forces, and Fitz-Oſborne was again my companion. The Scotch levied an army to oppoſe us. We haſtened to meet them, and an obſtinate engagement enſued. Night coming on, each

each party concluded itſelf victorious; we however maintained the field. Next morn ſaluted us with a ſpectacle of horror. Eager to give burial to the bodies of our friends, we demanded and obtained a truce, of which our enemies were equally deſirous with ourſelves.

As Fitz-Oſborne and I paſſed through the field, our ears were ſuddenly aſſailed by wailings of affliction in a female voice. We turned our heads, and beheld two women bending over a bleeding corſe.—We advanced towards them. She who ſeemed moſt afflicted, raiſed her face for a moment. With what new emotions did that tranſient glance affect my ſoul! I gazed—I panted—I continued immoveable.

Fitz-Oſborne approached them. He addreſſed her whom I have mentioned. "Lady," ſaid he, in a reſpectful tone, "this ſcene of carnage ill accords with the ſoftneſs of thy ſex. Avoid it—ſhock not thy ſight with objects ſo afflicting."

"Ah!"

"Ah!" returned she, wildly, "haſt thou a brother? Doſt thou mourn him dead?" "O, Malcolm, dear Malcolm," continued ſhe, ſinking on the corſe—"they would have me quit thee—they have taken thy life, and they would have me deſert thee!"

My torpor vaniſhed at theſe ſounds. I advanced, and, unknowing what I did, threw myſelf beſide her.

She regarded me with a look of ſurprize—"Doſt thou lament my brother," demanded ſhe. "Gentle Lady," ſaid I, taking her hand, "I lament thy Malcolm, becauſe thou lamenteſt him."

"Ah!" cried ſhe, ſhrieking, "perhaps thou wert his murderer—perhaps thy ſword pierced his boſom. Begone, barbarian! inſult not my griefs." At that moment ſome Scottiſh ſoldiers approached. On ſeeing the corſe, they ſet forth loud cries. "Our generous lord, the brave Malcolm!" exclaimed they, with one voice.

They ſtooped, took up the body, and placed it on their bucklers. The lady covered her face, and, leaning on the woman who attended her, followed them in ſilent ſorrow.

Impelled by a new born and violent paſſion, I ruſhed after the ſoldiers—"Tell me," cried I, "in pity tell me who is this beauteous maiden?"

"Siſter to him, whoſe breathleſs corſe we bear—the chief of Glencairn." "And her name?" "Amana."

They haſtened on, and I returned to Fitz-Oſborne. He penetrated my ſoul. I ſought not to conceal its emotions. He poured the balm of friendſhip into my wound. He ſoothed—he inſpired me with hope. I welcomed it with tranſport; indulged its flatteries, and was happy.

The truce ended both ſides engaged again. We were victorious in ſeveral encounters. We put the enemy to flight, and

and ravaged the ſurrounding lands. Yet my heart revolted at the employment. It was the country of Amana. I fancied her preſent. I fancied her enquiring—"if theſe were the fruits of my love?"

The idea unnerved my arm. I wiſhed ardently for peace. Fortune ſeemed propitious to that wiſh. The Scottiſh king, alarmed by our depredations and ſucceſs, diſpatched commiſſioners to Henry, in order to implore a ceſſation and negociate a treaty. We were recalled, our monarch ſatisfied, and our ſoldiers enriched with plunder.

—I alone was diſcontented. Relieved from one anxiety my heart now became a prey to a thouſand new ones. How ſhould I ſee Amana?—how inform her of my paſſion? Or were that poſſible, would ſhe return it—would ſhe hear the tale with ſympathy—might not her affections be engaged already beyond recal? Or might ſhe not regard in me the enemy of her country, not the ſlave of her charms?

Such were my reflections, and such my fears: I communicated them to Fitz-Osborne. Insensible himself to the pains or pleasures of love, he could not conceive my apprehensions; he considered them as absurd. But they had taken too deep a root to be overcome by reasoning or ridicule. He therefore took another method; counselled me to go to Scotland, to seek out Amana, and to offer her my hand.

"Alas!" returned I, "will not such conduct be presumption? What title have I to her favour? I have not merited it by my services. Shall I say to her—"Behold the spoiler of thy native land. Behold him who has embrued his hands in the blood of thy countrymen; reward him with thy love. No, dear friend, dear Fitz-Osborne, I am fated to unhappiness—to despair; I cannot counteract my destiny; I cannot abate its vigour!"

Thy

Thy ſire interrupted me with a ſmile—"Hear the voice of reaſon," ſaid he, "and ceaſe to torment thyſelf with fancied ills. If the ſoul of Amana is juſt and noble, ſhe will rather applaud thy valour, than reſent thy hoſtilities. If ſhe thinks not thus, ſhe is unworthy to be the wife of Montmorency. Try her by this teſt:—If ſhe is kind, be happy; if unkind, forget her. Let not thy ſpirit be depreſſed by the caprice of a woman. Let me again know my friend."

I ſighed—"Fitz-Oſborne, thou loveſt not! Forget her—Can I do ſo? Ah! that counſel was dictated by an unfeeling heart!"

"Not an unfeeling, but a free and a friendly one," replied thy ſire; "reflect a little—thou wilt know it better."

I preſſed his hand—"Forgive me, Fitz-Oſborne; forgive my petulance, and deſpiſe me not."

He returned the preſſure—it was enough—I was at eaſe. He renewed his

counſel, and I reſolved to follow it; but it was neceſſary I ſhould firſt viſit my own habitation, and a young and only ſiſter, who received her education in a neighbouring monaſtery.

Emma (ſo was ſhe called) beheld me with tranſport. I contemplated her opening beauties with a fraternal delight; yet my hand—my cruel hand———

Montmorency pauſed—he raiſed his eyes; he ſunk them again on the ground. A groan of agony burſt from his lips; he could not proceed. His emotions affected Alan with pity, and a horror of he knew not what. He continued ſilent however, and the old man at length reſumed his narration. "After embracing this fair bloſſom," ſaid he, "and commending her to the care of the holy ſiſterhood, I purſued my way to Scotland."

I gained the capital, and uſed every means to get intelligence of her who had

enſlaved

enſlaved my heart. My inquiries were anſwered with ſucceſs; I was told ſhe reſided in the caſtle of her brother, which with his poſſeſſions had fallen to her by his death; that ſhe had rejected the vows of a numerous croud of ſuitors, who paid homage to her charms, and lived in a total ſeclusion from all ſociety, ſave her domeſtics and her vaſſals.

This information at once gave me hope and fear. While I was pleaſed with her reſerve, I dreaded her inſenſibility. "Alas!" ſaid I, to myſelf, "may not Montmorency add one more to the liſt of the rejected."

This apprehenſion, however, prevented me not from trying my fortune. I bethought me of a ſtratagem to gain admittance to her preſence, and loſt no time in the execution. The caſtle of Glencairn was well known, I obtained a direction to it, and ſet off with a beating heart, attended by five truſty domeſtics.

On deſcrying the ſtately turrets, I felt new emotion. Now was the time for my ſtratagem. I contrived to fall off my horſe, and alarmed my domeſtics by feigned complaints of pain; I declared myſelf unable to mount again—they were perplexed—they knew not what to do; I redoubled my complaints, and encreaſed their anxiety.

At length ſome peaſants appeared; my ſervants demanded whether I could get an aſylum in the caſtle.

"We know not," they replied, "Our miſtreſs ſees no ſtrangers—but ſhe is charitable and generous—we will try." They haſtened to the caſtle, and returned in a ſhort time with ſome of Amana's domeſtics. "Our lady" ſaid they, "will fulfil the laws of hoſpitality; ſhe has commanded us to bear thee to her manſion."

The joy of my ſoul was ſo exceſſive at theſe words, that I had nearly betrayed myſelf,

myself, but sensible that all depended on that discovery, I restrained my agitation, and continuing my artifice, pretended to arise with difficulty and uneasiness.

I was borne to the castle, and conveyed to a magnificent apartment, where my officious attendants laid me on a couch, and prepared to administer remedies for an ill that did not exist.

But I had soon no longer need to feign disease. My transports—the joyful agitation of my spirits, were too much for my health; a fever seized me, which continued some days, during that time I had every assistance which kindness and pity could procure—But I required more—I required to see Amana herself, and that was impossible.

The fever quitted me, I recovered my strength, but still pretended imbecillity.

One day I ventured to hint my wishes to a woman whom Amana had sent to inquire of my health; "I am better," said I,

" but I cannot be at eaſe while that gratitude is reſtrained—while I am prevented from pouring out its effuſions at her feet who has inſpired it."

The woman retired—ſhe came back ſhortly, " I have told thy deſire to my miſtreſs," ſaid ſhe, " Amana conſents to ſee thee."

" O Heaven!" cried I tranſported, " ſhe conſents!" I pauſed—I recollected myſelf—I compoſed my countenance; I thanked this meſſenger in a calm tone, and bade her conduct me to the preſence of her lady; ſhe led me to a ſpacious ſaloon, where ſat the lovely Amana clad in a mourning habit.

Her poſture was penſive, and her looks were melancholy, ſhe ſeemed buried in thought and obſerved not my entrance. But that poſture—that melancholy—that penſiveneſs, teemed with a thouſand graces, I was loſt in admiration—I hardly breathed; at length—" It is ſhe!" cried I in a tone of rapture.

Amana

Amana ſtarted! ſhe ſaw me, and I fell at her feet.

"Charitable lady," cried I, "accept the acknowledgments of him thou haſt preſerved—he devotes to thee a life, which he owes ſolely to thy care, and he beſeeches thee to command his ſervices."

"Stranger," replied Amana, "I am informed of thy quality—thou art noble, and gratitude finds moſt room in noble hearts. But thou art miſtaken—to Heaven, not to me, theſe thanks are due; I have only practiſed the common duties of humanity, and thou oweſt me no acknowledgments. But a ſudden recollection ſtrikes me; I am not unacquainted with thy features; I have ſeen thee before—where I know not; I pray thee to aſſiſt my memory."

"Beauteous lady," cried I, "and doſt thou recall the image of Montmorency?—O happineſs!—thine, lady, has never

never quitted my boſom; it has continued there ſince the firſt day that gave thee to my enraptured eyes. A day, fatal and bloody—yet one which in ſhewing to me thee, was the firſt and moſt important of my life, for then—then only did I begin to exiſt."

I had taken her hand, ſhe drew it away with an air of offended modeſty; "Thy ſituation," ſaid ſhe in a reſerved tone, "precludes reſentment; but I would have thee learn the obſervance due to my ſex and rank." She aroſe, and would have quitted me.

I caught her robe: "ſtay, Lady," cried I, "this unfortunate ſhall no more offend thee. He will conceal the workings of his ſoul—he will bear far from thee his ſighs, and his complaints. Adorable Lady! afflict him not with thy anger—kill him not with thy diſdain!"

She ſtopped; ſhe regarded me with a milder air: "prove the ſincerity of thy

words,"

words," said she, "by thy deportment. Force me not to commit a breach of the laws of hospitality, or to regret I have observed them."

"Kind Lady!" exclaimed I, "beauteous Lady!—yes, I will obey thee—I will be mindful of thy caution—I will impose a restraint upon my rebellious tongue—though my heart burst in the conflict—I will not speak—it is better that I expire, than that I incur thy resentment."

She again assumed an air of severity. I was sensible of my error, and by submissive looks strove to deprecate her anger. I obtained her pardon—we entered into conversation, and I became still more and more enamoured.

She spoke of her brother with tears. I could not behold her weep without fresh agitation. But I constrained it—I mourned with her the loss of Malcolm. She was pleased, consoled, and beheld me with

with more complacency, though not with less reserve. We separated not till night, when I entered my chamber, my bosom panted with love and hope. I threw myself on a couch, yet thought not of repose. I was too happy. In fine, many more days passed on in delightful converse with her whom my soul adored. I could no longer affect indisposition; nor did I even think of affecting it. Joy had banished dissimulation; pleasure spoke in my countenance, and revelled in my heart.

The grief of Amana too became less violent. Her reserve disappeared insensibly, and she seemed to forget my indiscretion. Yet ever observant of modesty and decorum, her women were always present at our interviews, and auditors of our conversations.

One evening I took up a lute which lay in the saloon. Amana inquired if I was skilled in music. I bowed, touched the

the lute, and accompanied it with my voice. I chose a tender and impassioned air. I Anna-trembled, my looks down her cheeks, and she uttered the name of Malcolm.

"Then sweet and the tone of fire accents made me sensibly a more lively measure, and breathed the most impassioned sounds. I spoke of love, its hopes, its apprehensions, its delights. I painted the torments of a despairing lover; the notes became more melancholy. I looked at Anna; she blushed, and averted her eyes. No longer master of myself, I cast away the lute, flew towards her, pressed her hand, I devoured it with kisses. She recovered from her confusion, and frowning, asked, if thus I kept my promise. Then with a mingled air of haughtiness and modesty, quitted the saloon before I had power to prevent her.

"I continued my exclamations, and repeated my complaint. That woman, who

What

"What were now my sensations? The pangs I had just described, were all my own. I cursed my precipitation; I accused her of cruelty; and in a moment after retracted the charge. "No," cried I, "I have nothing to blame but my own blind impetuosity—my presumption—fatal impetuosity!—fatal presumption!—ye are justly repaid with the hatred of Amana!—with her detestation—her contempt!"

"But why, youth—why should I attempt to describe to thee my agonies? Thy heart, alive only to gratitude and compassion, feels not love. To thee, my transports will seem unreasonable, and tiresome."

"No, father," answered Alan, "true, if this be love, I feel it not. But I hear thee with pleasure, and am interested in thy sensations."

The old man proceeded.

"I continued my exclamations, and repeated my complaint." That woman who

who had procured me admiſſion to Amana's preſence, was moved with pity at my ſituation. She approached me—— "Noble Montmorency," cried ſhe, "encourage not deſpair. Believe a friend who aſſures thee, that the ſeverity of Amana ſprings only from the modeſty natural to her ſex, and not from the dictates of hatred."

"Ah!" cried I, "Abuſe me not with thy flatteries. I have been raſh—inſolent—imprudent—I deſerve her hate, and ſhould I not meet it?"

"And yet thou doſt not," ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, "were I allowed to reveal the ſecrets of my miſtreſs, I might tell thee more." I graſped her hand, "What couldſt thou tell me?" ſaid I eagerly. She ſmiled again. "Ah!" cried I, "inſpire me not with deluſive hopes, can Amana—O no—ſhe cannot love Montmorency!"

"And yet Montmorency deſerves to be loved," replied this woman, "he is young,

young, illuſtrious, noble and brave. Why ſhouldſt thou ſay ſhe cannot love him?"

"Ah! flatterer," ſaid I, trying to reſtrain my riſing joy, "grant that thy words are true—grant that ſhe did love me? Does ſhe ſo ſtill? Has not my preſumption."

"It was wrong," anſwered ſhe, "but do not therefore deſpair—we will unite our forces—we will diſpoſe her to forgiveneſs by ſubmiſſion and prudence."

"My preſerver!" exclaimed I, putting a ring of value on her finger. "No," ſaid ſhe, drawing it off, "my heart is not mercenary, pardon me noble, Montmorency, I cannot accept thy gift."

I implored, I entreated her acceptance of the ring, and at length prevailed.——"Well," cried ſhe, gaily in going from me, "we will ſoften this haughty Amana. We will ſubdue her reſerve." "But I tire thee youth with this minuteneſs."

"Father,"

"Father," anſwered Alan, "far from being fatigued, I hear thee with attention and delight. Proceed, I beſeech thee: thy words are grateful to mine ear, as the evening dew to the thirſty flowret."

"While I waited for the performance of this woman's promiſe," continued the old man, "numerous and conflicting ideas poſſeſſed my ſoul. If Amana loves me," whiſpered I to myſelf, "gracious Heaven, if Amana loves me!" I ſtopped.

"Wretched Montmorency," reſumed I, "delude not thy imagination with vain hopes. Does love wear the form of hate? Does it wear frowns, diſdain, averſion? Ah no!—yet Amana frowned—her eyes beamed killing ſcorn. Alas! ſhe loves me not!—yet perhaps maidenly reſerve and modeſty obliged her to aſſume that appearance. Good God! were that poſſible!"

Thus, by turns, a prey to exquiſite joy and cold deſpair, I waſted the hours 'till

till I beheld my confidant again. She entered——I flew towards her—I caught her hand—I looked in her face with an air of anxiety, but could not ſpeak.

"Let Montmorency hope," cried ſhe, ſmiling.

The words, the ſmile, filled my breaſt with unutterable tranſport. "Yes, he will hope!" exclaimed I, "he will welcome the truant to his boſom, it ſhall never more deſert him! But ſay, declare, does Amana, does ſhe pity, does ſhe love Montmorency? O repeat her expreſſions—give to my delighted ear the rapturous ſound!—Thou art my good angel—I will worſhip thee."

"Thy adoration is miſplaced," anſwered ſhe with a ſmile, "hadſt thou not had a more powerful pleader with Amana; my ſolicitations were uſeleſs."

"Ah! ſpeak—tell me—who was this generous advocate?"

"Even her own heart."

"Good

"Good Heaven!—Is ſuch happineſs reſerved for Montmorency?"

"Yes," returned my confidant, "but there are ſome conditions which thou muſt firſt fulfil. I ſpoke to Amana—I repreſented to her thy ſituation and thy torments—ſhe heard me with downcaſt looks and bluſhes. I augured good ſucceſs from theſe appearances. I purſued my work, and at length forced her to confeſs that thou wert moſt dear to her heart. Interrupt me not," continued ſhe, ſeeing me about to ſpeak, "hear out my recital. What wouldeſt thou have me do?" ſaid Amana, "(in return to my importunities.) Thou haſt wreſted my ſecret from me, but thinkeſt thou I am ſo ſhameleſs, ſo loſt to diſcretion and to pride, as to ſay to Montmorency—I love thee. No, Catherine—I know better what is due to the dignity of my birth and the honour of my ſex. I have yet preſerved both from the charge of lightneſs, and the rude

breath

breath of ſlander—let me ſtill do ſo—let me not give my diſcarded ſuitors a pretext to accuſe me. Would they not exclaim with juſtice—is this the relentleſs, the cold Amana?—ſhe who rejected our vows—who was deaf to our complaint? Yet ſhe, who on the knowledge of a few days, gives up her inſenſibility, her prudence—entertains an ardent paſſion for a ſtranger, and confeſſes her love unreſtrained by modeſty and ſhame? So would they ſay—and ſhall I incur ſuch reproaches?——No Catherine—let Montmorency firſt deſerve before he wins me—let me be aſſured of his conſtancy before I looſe my own freedom. One year I exact for the trial of his faith; if he is worthy of my favour he will not repine at the teſt I put him to. He muſt quit my caſtle now, and enter not again within its walls till the time of his probation is accompliſhed. When he returns, the hand and the affection of Amana ſhall be

wholly

wholly his." Catherine ceaſed to ſpeak at theſe words.

"O promiſe of delight and felicity!" exclaimed I, "Montmorency will not repine at the length of the race while the goal is in view. He will approve his faith and his conſtancy unblemiſhed, by the ſtrictneſs of his obedience. But ſay, kind confederate, can I not ſee the arbitreſs of my deſtiny once more?—think of the pains of abſence—let me alleviate them by recalling her laſt glances—her laſt words. Good Catherine, wilt thou not obtain for me this poor requeſt?"

"We have but to try," anſwered ſhe, paſſing out. With difficulty did I oblige myſelf not to follow her; but the dread of Amana's diſpleaſure, a dread worſe than death, reined in my ſteps.

I was ſhortly ſummoned to the preſence of her whom my ſoul valued above health or life. What were my emotions? I caſt myſelf at her feet in a delirium of

pleaſure

pleasure—I uttered a thousand extravagancies, while her sweetly blushing cheek and averted eye added to my raptures. Ah! that moment—could I then think—but hold my bursting heart—thou art not yet sufficiently agonized—thou hast not yet atoned. Montmorency paused again, he uttered a groan of anguish and resumed his narration.

"Sovereign of my affections and of my thoughts," said I, (when I had regained some degree of composure) "behold me ready to obey thy behests—see by the promptness of my obedience thy power over Montmorency. He murmurs not at thy rigour, but he blesses thy condescension."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.